

# Home Children Canada

## December 2024 Newsletter

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"Lost but not Forgotten" New Book Release Spring 2025

### A Boy's Journey: From Barnardo's Orphanage to a Life of Resilience in Canada by BHC, the late James Edward Bryans

As published in the *Edmonton Journal* Sun, Feb 09, 1997 ·Page 37

James Edward Bryans was born on March 5, 1909, in Cork, County Cork, Ireland, and emigrated to Canada at the age of 14 under the Barnardo's child migration scheme. He sailed aboard the *Minnedosa*, departing from Southampton on September 13, 1923, and arriving in Quebec on September 21, 1923. His Canadian placements included work with William A. Roadhouse in Perth, Ontario, and Isaac Aconley in Shanty Bay, Simcoe, Ontario.

James married Jane Bamford Wall, who was born on March 20, 1909, in Belfast, County Down, Northern Ireland. Jane passed away on April 18, 1997, and James followed on July 12, 1998, at the age of 87. They both died in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, and are buried in Cimetière Mont-Royal Outremont in Montreal Region, Quebec. James had at least one sibling, Charles Bryans.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, 1997, Jim recounted his story as a British Home Child for the *Edmonton Journal*. This is his story, in his own words:

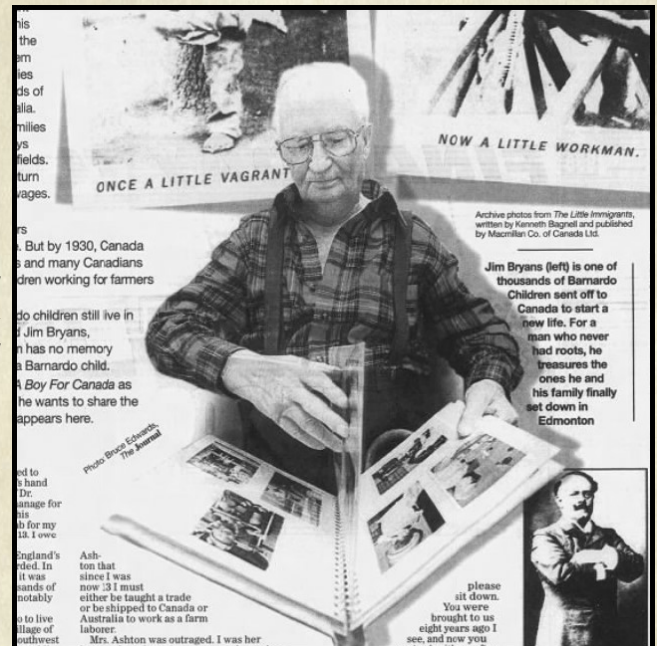
In 1915, when I was five, I failed to break free from a stranger's hand grip and became a ward of Dr. Thomas J. Barnardo's orphanage for homeless boys and girls. This orphanage picked up the entire tab for my welfare until I reached the age of 13. I owe them, still.

The Barnardo orphanage was England's oldest and largest, and well-regarded. In Canada, until about 40 years ago, it was mainly known for supplying thousands of boys to work on Canadian farms, notably in Ontario. At six I was sent by Dr. Barnardo to live with Mr. and Mrs. Finch in the village of White Notley in Essex County in southeast England. Mrs. Finch was a darling: cuddly, with smiling blue eyes and cherry cheeks. She saved up rabbit skins and traded with gypsies. Mr. Finch was a thoroughly decent man, a farm hand, gleaner and top-flight rabbit catcher.

White Notley village was a cluster of whitewashed, thatched-roofed cottages. It was a village bypassed by highwaymen, roving gospel preachers and worldly salesmen, a place long unchanged. Surrounding the village were gently rolling hills, grain fields and meadows divided by hedgerows shading wild primroses and violets. Most of the men worked on the farms. During school hours, frogs and hedgehogs could cross the dirt road free from being captured. My teacher was Mrs. Ashton. Quickly there was mutual bonding. In her gentle way she guided me through Grades 1 to 7. I learned a lot about long-dead British royalty: earls, dukes, noblemen and knights. I learned British battle tales, including Blenheim, Glenora and the Charge of the Light Brigade. At the close of the school day we always sang the hymn, For Those in Peril on the Seas.

On weekends I roamed the fields and meadows, climbing trees, foraging for beechnuts, walnuts, hazelnuts and filberts. I searched for moorhen and quail nests in springtime and killed frogs with my catapult at six. Proudly I brought these items home to Mrs. Finch.

PARTING TIME I was in school when an official from Dr. Barnardo's arrived to bring me back to London. He



informed Mrs. Ashton that since I was now 13 I must either be taught a trade or be shipped to Canada or Australia to work as a farm laborer. Mrs. Ashton was outraged. I was her best student, I was too young, and my education must not be ended, she exclaimed. Mrs. Finch held me tightly, tearfully, saying, "Please, please let me keep Jimmie. He's been so good." "I really wish I could lady," the official said, "but we have to collect all our boarded-out boys when they are 13." Crying, I kissed Mrs. Finch goodbye, told her she would always be my mum and I loved her ever so much.

STEPNEY CAUSEWAY, LONDON, JULY 1923 The office door of the Barnardo home's director was slightly ajar. I pushed back my hair before knocking, then entered and saw a portly, grey-haired man seated on a bandy-legged chair. Looking up from scattered papers on his desk, he asked: "You're Bryans?" "Yes, sir, my first name is James, but I'm called Jim." "I see, well... please sit down. You were brought to us eight years ago I see, and now you are back with us after seven years in White Notley. "Your school reports have been excellent. Good behavior, good co-operation. You are now 13, have a good education and we must decide what to do with you." "Yes, sir," I replied. He moved his chair back a little and looked at me before saying "You are small for 13 and rather thin," then asked, "Have you been properly fed?" "Oh yes, sir! I've eaten lots of porridge, bread and jam, suet pudding, bird's eggs, lots of rabbits and some frogs." "My goodness! Quite remarkable! But surely you didn't eat frogs." "Only the real big, green ones and just the legs," I replied.

The director, who had not told me his name, folded his hands behind his head before saying, "Well, here is what we can do with you. We can ship you off to one of our colonies as a farm laborer or you can stay with us to learn a trade. You can become a tinsmith, a blacksmith, a cobbler, carpenter or compositor." Looking at his watch, he said, "I'll go for a cup of tea; when I return I'll want to have your decision."

Staying with Dr. Barnardo's facility in London to serve a seven-year apprenticeship didn't seem very exciting. But which colony to choose, Canada or Australia? Similar in size but oh so different. Instant flashbacks glowed in my mind. Canada with millions of wild geese, hordes of buffaloes, forests and prairies, and hockey. Australia, land of rabbits, kangaroos and soccer. I had a difficult choice. I finally decided I would like Canada best.

The director returned from his tea and sat in his chair. "Well, Bryans, what have you decided?" "Sir, I'd like to go to Canada best of all." Leaning forward, he studied me before saying, "You do seem a bit small for the colonies..." "But sir, I'm really very strong. I've eaten lots of rabbits and stuff. I've climbed the hardest trees in White Notley and Mrs. Finch said I was a good boy." The director smiled and said, "Sending you to Canada with a mate from another boy. A ship is leaving in September. It'll toughen you up." Rising from his chair he said, "Be a good lad, run along now. I'm sure some farmer there will be most happy to have you." Suddenly I fearful and asked if I would be alone in Canada. "No, no at all," he replied. "At least one year or older chap will see what you are up to."

TORONTO, SEPT. 23, 1923 Dr. Barnardo maintained a large brick house on Jarvis Street in Toronto for receiving and inspecting newly arrived boys. On the second day of my arrival I watched other boys leave, some for farms as far away as the Prairies and Ontario. All were dressed alike in bowler hats, grey knee-length pants and thick-soled shoes. My turn to leave came after lunch. I was supplied with a trunk labelled J. Bryans c/o W. A Roadway, R.R. #2 Stratford, Ontario. I was wished good luck and told to behave and to work hard.

When I arrived at the Stratford railway station I could not find Mr. Roadway. I walked from end to end on the wide wooden platform. Gradually the station had become quiet, with the only sound coming from the telegrapher's keyboard. At last a very tall man wearing a drooping straw hat and bib overalls ending above his ankles hastily approached. "I'm Bill Roadway," he said. "Are you the boy from Barnardo's?" "I'm James Bryans. I'm called Jimmie sir." "Jesus! You're small!" he exclaimed. He wiggled a finger in his ear, then told me I couldn't weigh more than a sack of spuds. He didn't seem nearly as pleased to see me as the grey-haired man in London had said he would be. He loaded my trunk on his light wagon and I climbed on a high-sprung seat. I looked down on the horse's back and could have reached forward enough to pat it. I asked Bill if the horse was a cow pony. "Hell, no," he replied. "She's a broken down old milk horse. Her name's Minnie and she's the same age as you are."

Bill Roadway owned a dairy farm about a mile and a half from Stratford, on the road to Sebringville. He slapped the reins on Minnie's rump and off we started for the farm. Minnie was trotting along with her head slanted sideways as if she had a sore neck and was distressed. I asked Bill about this. "Hell, no — she ain't got a sore neck, but she's blind as a bat. I'll be shooting her before too long. I'll likely get \$5 for selling her as fox feed." I thought this to be ever so cruel and felt sad. For a while we were quiet, then Bill said, "In case you don't know it, that's a field of corn we're passing. We might have some for supper, but I don't suppose you even know what it is." I told Bill my school geography book said it was used to fatten up chickens and pigs and was called maize and I hadn't eaten it. "God help us."

I heard Bill mutter as he slapped the reins hard on Minnie's rump for the second time. I asked Bill if he was a good rabbit hunter. "Look, fella," Bill said, "I've got a damn big herd of Holstein cows. They have to be milked by hand at four in the morning and again at nightfall. On top of that, I have to peddle the milk door to door in Stratford. So why would I hunt rabbits?" I informed Bill that in my geography book all farmers in Australia hunted rabbits and that they were ever so good to eat. Bill spit in the road, then told me my head had been stuffed full of baloney. Still bubbling with curiosity, I asked Bill if his cows had white faces and long curved horns like the ones shown in my school book. "God, here we go again," he

exclaimed. "No, James, my cows are all dehorned, them were Hereford longhorns way out in Alberta you were looking at." As we turned into the dirt lane a barking dog ran to meet us. I asked Bill if his cows or pigs ever bit people. He sighed. "You must be pulling my leg. Don't you know anything? Oh, never mind!" He kindly took me off the wagon and quickstepped me into the kitchen. "Now, you'll be milking, you'll be hauling slops. Cows don't bite, either stay away from my cows or learn about how to milk. Bill lived with his aged mother, Flora, and his sister Janet. Before getting off the wagon Bill gave me an overall scrutiny, saying he didn't know if Flora would "take to me." We were soon to find out.

MEETING THE FAMILY Flora said, "My, but you look like a young boy scout." Janet added, "Marvellous complexion, Mum. Long eyelashes too." Bill growled, "And a head full of baloney and questions, screwy ones." We unloaded my trunk into a woodshed and before long Flora wanted to see what I had brought along. When I opened it Flora nearly had a fit. "Just look at this," as she tossed my clothes helter skelter. "No rubbers, no long johns, no bib overalls, no mackinaw, no toque, hardly a thing any damn good and all brand new. What am I going to do?" Janet said, "Ma, I think there's been a mixup. I think this trunk was made up for one of the boys they send to Australia. Too bad Ma." The advantages of locking onto one of Dr. Barnardo's boys included total control, minimum wages and indenture for a number of years.

LIFE ON THE FARM Very early in my time with the Roadways I came to hate Holstein cows. Bill had 18 of the black and white critters and four gentle brown Jerseys. Hand-milking cows at four in the morning was a surefire killer of boyish spirits. As Bill had predicted, I was indeed kicked into the barn gutter a number of times.

The farm had two bedrooms, so I had to sleep on a cot in the upstairs hallway. Flora, who never called her son anything but Willie-Arthur, was always up first in the morning and would shake me awake as she passed my cot. Bill was always up last. Every morning, from the bottom of the stairs, Flora would belt out maybe half a dozen "Willie-Arthurs" before hearing any noise or movement from above.

My first real shock on the farm occurred almost at once when Flora shook me awake at 4 a.m. She took me to the barn and told me to watch her milk a cow. When she had finished she handed me a pail and a three-legged stool, then said, "Now you try it." I was a bit fearful and nearly muffed it when I tried for the first time to milk a cow. Before I got into the proper rhythm I'd taken a couple of swats from the bewildered cow's tail. After breakfast the next morning Bill took me with him to help on his milk route in Stratford. I went with him for the next two or three summers, often he handed the job over to me. At 13 I was probably Canada's youngest house-to-house milkman.

One day Bill went to an auction sale and brought back the most high-stepping horse in the county, an eight-year-old Hackney mare. Suddenly I had a big pet to love and care for. Her name was Nancy. My afternoons were generally hitched her to a wagon, tied old Minnie behind and let her follow. My afternoons were generally filled with cleaning out cow barns, the pig pen, chicken house or horse stalls as needed. Washing milk bottles and splitting wood. Although for 2½ years I received no pay from Bill, I had two sources of income. Like many farmers, the Roadway family drove into Stratford on Saturday evenings to buy necessities and exchange gossip. Sometimes I would be taken along and Flora would give me a dollar. My other income came by collecting quarters left in empty milk bottles by my generous milk-route customers during the Christmas season of 1923 and 1924. I saved this money and bought a bike.

At times, mostly before dropping off to sleep at night, I would compare my situation with my happy days in White Notley, with Mrs. Ashton and Mrs. Finch. I felt anger, resentment, loneliness and frustration. The days were long and hard, the nights so short that sometimes, resting my head against the cow's flank, I would fall asleep. I greatly missed any chances to enjoy the companionship of boys and girls of my age. No single incident sparked me to leave the Roadway farm, nor was there extended secret planning. However, on a fine spring night — at one in the morning — when I knew I would have three hours' lead before milking time, I took off on my bike. I rode into the night with no predetermined destination. I neither saw nor heard of the Roadways again. I could not help feeling bitter and desperate. Bill had robbed me of 2½ years' wages, of much-needed sleep and of boyhood fun. I, in turn, robbed him of the same amount of indentured free labor and perhaps lowered his rating with Dr. Barnardo's. Bill would be spitting mad; Flora, perhaps, would understand. But I had nearly reached my 16th birthday. I had to make my own decisions; I had to be a man. I had to discover the Canada that had been hidden from me and the good Canadians who helped me to now proclaim: Canada, Dear Canada, when I first came to you, and for three years afterward I did not like you at all. For the past 70 years I have loved you greatly. You made me a happy, useful and proud citizen. I came to know and enjoy your rivers, lakes and mountains. I have travelled your forests, known its denizens well. I am very glad the grey-haired man in London, so long ago said, "You are small for 13 but I'll let you go." Thank you, Canada.

Edmonton Journal Edmonton, Alberta, Canada · Sunday, February 09, 1997 by Paul Marck  
"Barnardo Boy Finally Plants Roots"

Days of pedalling took Jimmy Bryans 150 km away from the Roadway farm to Niagara Falls. Gazing at one of the world's great spectacles, he wondered whether his own fortunes were like the thundering waters, about to cascade over a precipice. Tired eyes and a rumbling stomach reminded Jimmy he had nowhere to go and nothing to eat. "There was no social net. You either worked or went hungry." He convinced a Greek restaurateur that he could wash dishes, given his past experience rinsing milk bottles. The restaurant owner in turn kept the 15-year-old fed and let him sleep in the loft above the kitchen. It wasn't much. But to a teenager who had been bound day and night to life on the farm, who wasn't allowed to go to school or to socialize, he was free to come and go as he pleased, after work. The experience on the farm had left Jim bitter. "Probably the thing I resented and missed most was companionship with other young people." "It was isolating... the actual concept of (child) immigration was a modified form of slavery. Young boys were indentured to age 18 with nothing to show for it." After a year in Niagara Falls, Jim went to work as a cook in a lumber camp in Northern Ontario. His culinary experience was basic — what he had picked up at the Greek restaurant. At that camp Jim met a government agent, Bob Miller. A chemical engineer by trade, Miller worked as a "checker," ensuring that logs taken had more than a four-inch diameter. Miller hired Jim as his assistant. "That was really a turning point to decent-paying work," Jim says. In 1929, Miller took a job as an assayer at the Cisco gold mine in northern Quebec. Jim went too and began life as an itinerant miner. He learned

fire assaying — heating large chunks of rock to high temperature, then dousing them with water until they split, revealing a vein of precious ore. Jim toiled in gold mines across the country — Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and the Northwest Territories — working his way up to mill superintendent. But he couldn't resist searching for his roots. In 1935, Jim set sail for England. On the ship he met Jane Wall, a pretty, shy young woman who worked as a mother's helper in Montreal. She got off the boat in Ireland to visit relatives; Jim continued on to Liverpool. By the time he arrived, Jim was a nervous wreck. How to start? Who would he find? Where would he go? He sought out the company of men like himself, who worked hard and lived by their wits. He fell in with the tough, blue-collar crowd of merchant seamen and longshoremen. "It was a disaster. I got very drunk in Liverpool and didn't accomplish a thing." After a couple of weeks, Jim returned to Canada a broken man. But, recalling the budding friendship he had made on the ship, he got in touch with Jane Wall. Within a year, they married. "It was a pretty rough change for her. We got married and she had to live in a little mining town and use a wood stove and buckets for water. "The ore gets mined out. So you have to pick up your house and your gear and move on." One move, in 1939, took them to Saudi Arabia. After 18 months, it was back to Canada, mostly mining in the N.W.T. In 1947, Jim found a job as a metallurgist at Sherritt Gordon in Fort Saskatchewan. He stayed there 25 years, retiring as a supervisor in 1972. While at Sherritt Gordon, Jim had a chance to move to Perth, Australia, where the company opened a nickel mine. But for a man who never had roots, Jim appreciated that his wife and three little girls had established theirs in Canada. That's where they belonged. So the Bryans returned to Edmonton, to their stucco bungalow. Their family expanded and fanned out. In Jim's small apartment in Garneau Hall hang pictures of six grandchildren. There was a brother, Charlie, two years older than Jim. He too shipped out as a Barnardo Boy and worked on a farm a few kilometers from Stratford, Ont., in the 1920s. They weren't close and Charlie died several years ago. Today Jim Bryans confronts the memories of a lifetime, good and bad.



Jim Bryans, wife Jane and infant daughter Mary take a stroll in downtown Toronto in 1941

When asked how he feels about life today, he replies: "It's a dead loss." Whether it was being uprooted at an early age from the Finches, the only family he ever knew, or his harsh treatment upon arriving in Canada, he's not sure. Then his mood changes as he flips through a photo album, with pictures of Jane and daughters Mary, Bonnie and Moira. "We had 60 good years together," Jim says fondly of his wife. Many of the pictures show a smiling Jane, on the beach or out for a hike, often with one or more of their daughters. These days Jim lives by himself. He's lost Jane to the ravages of Alzheimer's. She stays in a long-term care home because Jim, whose leg was amputated due to circulation problems, was no longer able to care for her. He visits her, but the spark of recognition, the laughter and reminiscences of shared times are gone. Jim feels all alone again, like he was when he set off for Canada more than 70 years ago. All the same, Jim Bryans looks forward to spring when he'll return to Northlands Park racetrack on fine Saturday afternoons. "I go out to watch the ponies. For me, that's therapeutic."

# Building New Lives: The Dr. Barnardo's Homes Colonization Scheme

By Lori Oschefski

The Dr. Barnardo's Homes Colonization Scheme was an ambitious initiative aimed at transforming the lives of young boys from impoverished backgrounds by integrating them into Canada's agricultural society. Through a carefully planned system of migration, settlement, and support, the scheme sought to provide these boys with opportunities to become self-sufficient farmers while simultaneously aiding the development of Canada's rural landscape. However, the program placed high expectations on the boys, demanding physical endurance, economic independence, and rapid acclimatization to their new environment.

The Dominion Lands Act, passed in 1872, was a Canadian law aimed at encouraging the settlement of the vast areas of land in western Canada (primarily in what is now Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta). The act was modeled after the U.S. Homestead Act and was a key component of the Canadian government's efforts to expand settlement and agricultural development in the Prairies. Under the law, anyone over 18 (usually men) could get 160 acres of land for a small fee of \$10. To keep the land, they had to live on it, build a house, and farm a portion of it within three years. This helped turn empty land into farms and communities.



*A soddy was a type of home built from sod (blocks of grass and soil) that was common on the prairies of Western Canada in the early 1900s. These homes were a practical solution for settlers who faced limited access to traditional building materials like wood or stone in the vast open grasslands.*

Under the scheme, boys who had previously lived in the care of Dr. Barnardo's Homes were offered a chance to settle on their own homesteads in Manitoba and other western provinces. Each boy was required to possess at least \$150 in savings, which served as a starting capital for their journey and settlement. The funds were handed over to the program's officials, who would manage their allocation. In return, the boys were provided with land parcels of 160 acres, the standard homestead size under the Dominion Lands Act. They also received assistance with transportation, essential supplies, and the construction of basic living facilities, including a small house and stable.

The boys were expected to demonstrate strong work ethics and adaptability. Upon arrival, they worked on the Farm Home in Russell, Manitoba, for six months, during which they were trained in farming techniques and prepared to backset their land for spring planting. This period allowed them to become familiar with the demands of agricultural life and save further funds for the next phase of their settlement. During the winter months, they were expected to sustain themselves without depleting their initial capital, with the exception of costs associated with keeping their oxen.

Economic self-reliance was a key expectation of the scheme. Boys were required to repay the cost of their assistance, including the transportation, provisions, and agricultural equipment provided to them. Payments were to be made over time, either through direct financial contributions or by laboring on lands associated with the Farm Home. Additionally, bonuses were offered to incentivize hard work, such as breaking new land or achieving successful crop yields. By the end of their first year, it was anticipated that the boys would have cultivated enough land and grown sufficient crops to sustain themselves without further institutional aid.

The boys were also encouraged to establish stable family lives as a marker of their success and permanence on the land. Those who chose not to marry were expected to hire a boy to assist with the workload. The scheme even made provisions for the maintenance of two individuals during the critical six months between planting and harvest, reflecting the expectation that the boys would begin building their own households.

Despite its structured nature, the colonization scheme carried inherent challenges. The young settlers faced the harsh realities of the Canadian frontier, including extreme weather, isolation, and the physical demands of farming. The success of the program hinged on the boys' ability to overcome these obstacles and adhere to the program's rigorous expectations. Those who failed to meet the requirements risked losing their homesteads, as the lands and provisions were tied to their performance and compliance with the Dominion Lands Act.

In conclusion, the Dr. Barnardo's Homes Colonization Scheme was a bold attempt to reshape the lives of disadvantaged boys by transforming them into productive and self-reliant settlers. While it offered opportunities for growth and independence, it also placed substantial demands on the boys, requiring them to navigate financial responsibilities, labor-intensive farming, and social expectations. For many, the program represented a chance to build a better future, but it was not without significant personal and environmental challenges. This initiative remains a striking example of how child migration programs intersected with the broader goals of nation-building during Canada's expansion into the West.

# Thinking positive

By Andrew Simpson

Author of "The Ever Open Door"

Lori said that she was "aiming for positive things" for this edition and as I reflected on that theme it occurred that there is a great deal that is positive about our story of the children migrated out of desperate poverty, family catastrophe and a primitive childcare provision which was heavily dependent on charity.

First is that obvious observation that in a brace of a few decades British Home Children has gone from a barely known part of history into a mature field of study, replete with scholarly books, a growing database of names of those who were migrated and groups across both Canada and here in Britain engaged in promoting the story.

And while there are still tragic episodes of child neglect and worse, along with a growing return to a reliance on charitable organizations it is the recognition that the State has a primary role in protecting all young people from exploitation, while securing the best education provision and eliminating child poverty.

Of course, the degree to which States manage this is varied and in the current challenging economic situation we must remain vigilant and call out any fall from what we would want for our own kids.

But it is easy to forget that in the debates about the rights and wrongs of the migration policy, the personal indignation of some that it should never have happened tempered by those with a more balanced historical interpretation are the children who went.

And walking with them are the stories of their immediate families and descendants. Which touches on the experiences of those of us who have become involved in the BHC project.

For many it was a revelation to discover the story of a family member sent to Canada. They were rarely spoken of, and in time that silence consigned the individual to oblivion.

[British Home Children ..... the story from Britain](#)

Visit Andrew's Blog:

<https://chorltonhistory.blogspot.com/>

So, I never knew that one of my great uncles opted to be migrated, and if my mother knew the story she never told and with her death his existence pretty much faded away.

But on the positive his discovery led to my interest in British Home Children, an interest which now stretches over sixteen years, includes heaps of articles, a Facebook site and an association with one of charities involved in childcare and migration in the 19th century.

All of which brought great uncle Roger out of the shadows and along the way led me to connect with my Canadian cousins, of whom there are many. They were actually the descendants of Roger's sister who followed him out eleven years later on an Empire Settlement programme.

Along the way I became friends with Lori, who I admire for her skill, tenacity and commitment to widening the story of British Home Children. As well as, Susan (Hillman) Brazeau and Tricia Leslie. Susan regularly undertakes talks to raise awareness of the story and Tricia runs our own BHC Facebook site here in Britain.

There are plenty more "colleagues, friends and associates", who I wouldn't have come to know were it not for BHC.

All of which I know will be replicated by many who are engaged in the subject, which just leaves one very personal and positive historical comment, and that is related to the descendants of Great Uncle Roger.

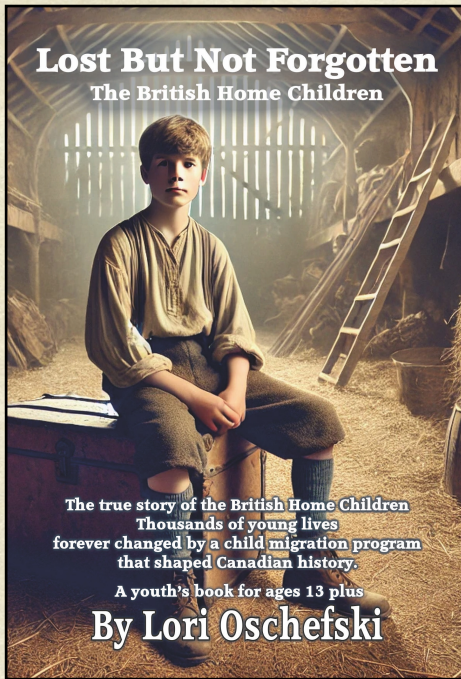
In the century and a bit since he left, our family has grown, gone off in many different directions with back stories as varied as any family.

Happily, despite a few hiccups we have prospered, contributed in many ways to the communities we live in and remain proud of our own BHC.

And that's enough for me.

## The Home Child generation The Hall siblings family





## “Lost but Not Forgotten”

Spring 2025 Release

by Author Lori Oschefski

Imagine leaving everything you know behind—your family, your friends, your home—to cross an ocean into the unknown. For over 100,000 children sent to Canada as part of the British Home Child (BHC) programs between 1869 and 1948, this was their reality. These young migrants, some as young as four years old, came with hopes for a brighter future but often faced unimaginable challenges and hardships.

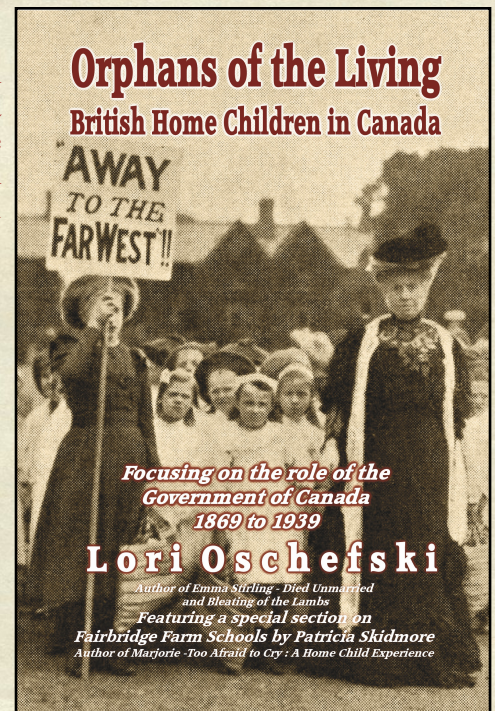
“Lost but Not Forgotten” is currently taking shape as a book that brings their stories to life for today’s youth. This adaptation of my earlier work, “Orphans of the Living”, is being carefully crafted for readers aged 13 and up. It is the first historical non-fiction book for this age group that covers the BHC programs from start to finish. My hope is that through this book, our youth will not only learn about these remarkable children but also understand their lasting impact on Canadian history.

This book shines a light on how the British Home Children were woven into the fabric of Canadian society. Despite the adversity they faced, their contributions were immense. From working in homes, farms, and factories to playing roles in major historical events such as the Halifax Explosion, the creation of the Canadian flag and the rebuilding of the Canadian Parliament after the fire of 1916, the BHC were integral to shaping the Canada we know today.

Stories of resilience, courage, and determination are being brought together within these pages, along with references to significant moments in Canadian history. Each story highlights the strength of the human spirit and underscores the importance of remembering the BHC’s legacy. Their struggles and triumphs remind us that even in the face of great challenges, individuals can leave a lasting mark on the world around them.

The release of “Lost but Not Forgotten” will mark an important step in ensuring that the stories of the British Home Children are not just remembered but also passed on to future generations. Plans are underway to release this book in French, further broadening its reach and impact.

As readers explore the pages of Lost but Not Forgotten, I hope they reflect on how history shapes us all. This story is more than just tales from the past; it is a reminder of the strength and resilience that defines the human experience. I hope this book inspires a deeper understanding of how the British Home Children helped build our nation. Their stories, though lost to some for many years, will never be forgotten.



“Orphans of the Living” is available on Amazon in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.



## Presidents Annual Christmas Message

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As the holiday season approaches, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible year we've had at Home Children Canada. It has been another exciting chapter in our journey to honor and preserve the legacy of the British Home Children (BHC).

Throughout the year, I, along with our dedicated speakers and associated groups, have shared the remarkable and poignant stories of the Home Children with audiences across the country. These presentations have not only deepened public understanding but have also fostered a greater appreciation for the resilience and contributions of the Home Children to Canada's history.

Our researchers have also been very busy this year, assisting countless members in uncovering and preserving their family histories. We reopened the Registry this year for updates and additions, and the results have been phenomenal. To date, 400 missing BHC have been added, and countless BHC pages have been updated. This effort would not have been possible without our wonderful, dedicated team who work tirelessly on the Registry each and every day.

We are thrilled to share some EXCITING NEWS! Home Children Canada is collaborating with private investors and the City of Orillia on plans to open a new British Home Children Museum in Orillia, Ontario. This project holds immense significance as it represents a permanent home for the stories, artifacts, and history of over 100,000 children who were brought to Canada under child migration schemes.

Orillia was chosen as the site for this important endeavor because it is close to my home, allowing me to actively oversee and manage the museum. Additionally, its central location near Muskoka and Peterborough makes it ideal for accessibility. Peterborough, in particular, played a vital role in this history, as over 9,000 children—primarily girls—arrived there.

We have identified two potential sites for the proposed museum and have already begun fundraising efforts. Our incredible surviving British Home Child, Sir George Beardshaw, gave us a head start by hosting a silent auction for his 101st birthday in September. Since September we have raised an impressive \$7,000 toward the museum's development. While we have a long way to go, I am confident that with your continued support, we will reach our goal in no time. Every donation, no matter the size, brings us closer to making this vision a reality.

Remember, all donations are tax-deductible and can be made online at:  
<https://homechildrencanada.com/donate>.

As we celebrate the season of giving, let us also honor the enduring spirit of the British Home Children. Your generosity and dedication to this cause ensure that their stories will never be forgotten.

Wishing you all a joyous and peaceful holiday season,

Lori Oschefski  
President, Home Children Canada

