

January, 2017

2017
HAPPY NEW YEAR

British Home Child Group International

The Gibbs and Benyon Receiving Homes, Sherbrooke Quebec by Sandra Joyce Design and Layout by Karen Mahoney

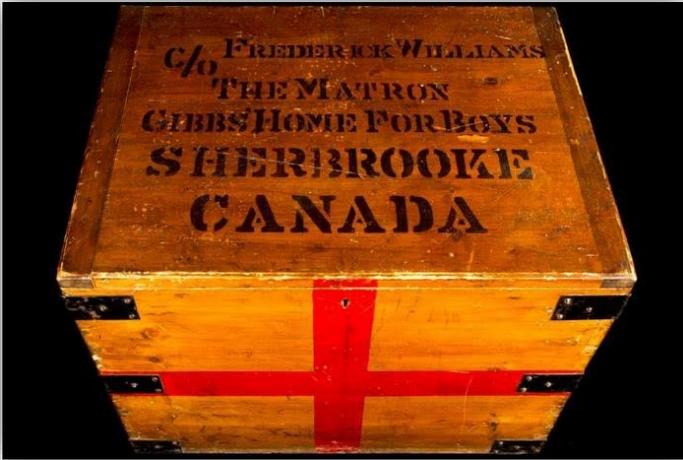


Photo credit Missisquoi Museum

In 1883, the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society developed an Emigration Branch to send children to Canada to work as farm labourers and domestics. The Church had been inspired by what they deemed to be the successful emigration work of Maria Rye and Annie MacPherson.

The book, *The First Forty Years – a Chronicle of the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society 1881 – 1920*, states that in 1884, a Receiving Home in Canada was actively searched for. It further states: “as it is generally known, the chief objective in sending children to Canada is to separate them entirely from their former dangerous surroundings, to which they might return after leaving the Homes if they remained in the Mother Country.”

An Emigration Committee was formed that included four members of the prominent and influential Gibbs family including Mrs. H.H. Gibbs who later became the first Lady Aldenham. Before the year was over, premises were purchased through donations at 117 Bowen Street in Sherbrooke, Quebec. The building became known as the Gibbs’ Home in recognition of the Gibbs’ family’s generosity.

In April, 1885, the first party of girls left for Canada under the care of Reverend Bridger and the Matron of the Sherbrooke Home. The Gibbs Home was used primarily for the reception of girls. Two years later, the Benyon Home - a Receiving Home for Boys, was made possible through a donation made by Richard Benyon. It was located near the Gibbs Home in Sherbrooke.

In 1897, the Benyon Home was closed and the Gibbs Home became the Society’s main Receiving Home for Boys in Canada until its closure in 1933. At the same time, The Church took over the management of Maria Rye’s Our Western Home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario and the girls were sent there instead until its closure in 1921.

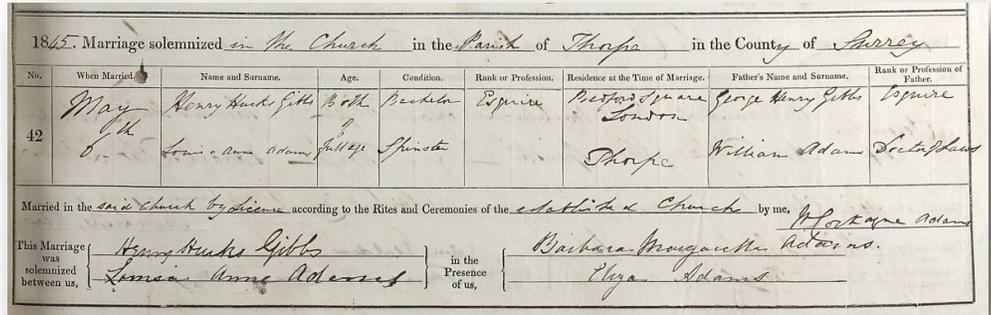
Emigration to Canada increased steadily year by year until 1909. In this year, the Emigration Committee reached a decision, though, not to emigrate girls under the age of fourteen and so, fewer girls were sent. Also, in this year the Society introduced a new method of fund-raising called the ‘penny-a-week’ box to secure small donations from the general public who could not afford an annual subscription. This helped support the child migrant scheme as well as the more than a hundred ‘Homes’ the church funded in Great Britain.

In 1915, emigration to Canada was suspended due to the threat of submarines during the Atlantic crossing. By this time, over 200 ‘old boys’ had already joined the Canadian contingent and were actively serving. The Gibbs Home was kept open for any who needed to go there for a much-needed respite. *Continued on page 4.....*

The Gibbs Family - Waifs and Strays Emigration Branch Benefactors by Sandra Joyce

The Gibbs Home in Sherbrooke, Quebec was used as the major receiving home for girls emigrated to Canada by the Church of England Waifs and Strays' Society from 1885 to 1897. After that time, it was used solely as a receiving home for Waifs and Strays' boys until 1933. The Home was named for the Gibbs family because of their incredible generosity and involvement in the Emigration Branch of the Waifs and Strays' Society.

Louisa Anne Adams married Henry Hucks Gibbs in 1845. Together they had six sons and one daughter. The matriarch of the family, Louisa Gibbs, was noted as the main benefactor of the Emigration Branch Committee. However, other members of the family who also served and provided financial support were her husband, Henry Hucks Gibbs, her sons Reverend Kenneth Francis Gibbs (who later became the Archdeacon of St. Albans), and Vicary Gibbs and daughter Edith Gibbs.



Lord Aldenham

Mrs. H.H. Gibbs later became Lady Aldenham when her husband was made Baron Aldenham, of Aldenham in the County of Hertford. This title, in the Peerage of the United Kingdom, was created for her husband, Henry Hucks Gibbs, on the 31st of January 1896.

Lord Aldenham was a prominent businessman: he was the head of the family firm of Antony Gibbs & Sons (founded by his grandfather) and a Director and finally Governor of the Bank of England. He was also briefly a Tory Member of Parliament in the House of Commons. As well, he was a member of the Philological Society and was a major benefactor to the Oxford English Dictionary.

According to the book *The First Forty Years - the Chronicle of the Waifs and Strays Society*, the Gibbs family was involved in many facets of the Waifs and Strays Society in England. However, they also strongly believed that the emigration of impoverished children to Canada was a significant way to raise the unfortunate youths out of their dire circumstances.

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No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the Time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
42	May 1845	Henry Hucks Gibbs	20	Spinster	Esquire	St. Peter's Church, London	George Henry Gibbs	Esquire
		Louisa Anne Adams	17	Spinster		St. Peter's Church, London	William Adams	Esquire

Gibbs Family 1861 UK Census

The Parisian by Sandra Joyce



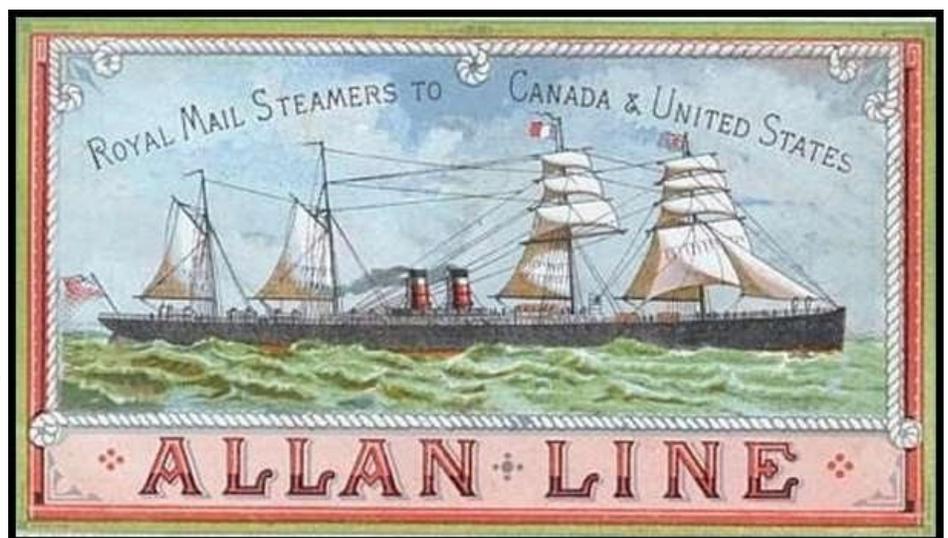
The S.S. *Parisian* was launched in November 1880 in Glasgow and was built by Robert Napier and Sons for the Allan Line out of Liverpool, England. She was the first North Atlantic Mail steamer built of steel. She was also the first ship with bilge keels. A bilge keel is used to reduce a ship's tendency to roll and thus reduces seasickness. Bilge keels are employed in pairs (one for each side of the ship). There was accommodation for 150 first class, 100 second class, and 1000 passengers in steerage as the *Parisian* was built to meet the rising immigration tides. Library and Archives Canada estimates that 2,000 British Home Children were sent to Canada on her decks.

The *Parisian's* maiden voyage took place on March 10 in 1881 from Liverpool to Halifax and Boston. In 1899, she was refitted with a triple-expansion engine and one funnel and pole masts without yards. In 1902, she was updated with Marconi wireless telegraphy.

There were two incidences that were remarkable during the *Parisian's* active service. In 1905, while waiting at the entrance of Halifax harbour for Pilot Flemming to board, the *Parisian's* Captain J. M. Johnston spotted the Hamburg-American Steamer *Albano* approaching his ship. He heard the *Albano's* signal 'we are going astern' but the ship did not go astern. Captain Johnston could offer no explanation of the *Albano's* action, unless it was that her engineer had got his orders mixed up, and instead of reversing had continued ahead. Thinking quickly, Captain Johnston called for 'full steam ahead' and thus saved the ship from being damaged in the engines. The *Albano* crashed into the starboard side of the *Parisian* but because of the location of the damage, they were able to continue to the pier. Captain Johnston said, "The damage to the ship was bad enough, but it might have been worse and I am glad that we were able to save the nine hundred lives on board."

Pandemonium broke out. A rumour had started in Halifax that all lives had been lost and crowds rushed to the pier. The *Halifax Herald* later reported that, although no one was supposed to go down to the pier, all classes and conditions of people were there. It is estimated that 10,000 people came to the harbour on foot and by boat to view the ships.

Continued on page 4.....



The Gibbs and Benyon Receiving Homes, Sherbrooke Quebec *continued*

During the duration of the war, countless more 'Waifs and Strays' Boys enlisted with many perishing on the soil of France or at sea. Field Marshall Earl Roberts, V.C. praised the contributions of the 'Old Boys' in letter to the Society: "I am of course greatly pleased to note that so many Old Boys of the Society are serving their country in the Army and Navy, and that some of them have come over with the Canadian contingent." This letter was significantly poignant as the Field Marshall himself was killed in France shortly after writing this letter.

Aside from the Gibbs Home and the Benyon Home in Sherbrooke, Quebec and Our Western Home in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, the following two more Homes were managed by the Waifs and Strays Society. The Elizabeth Rye Home for Girls (aged 14 to 18) was opened in 1924 at 661 Huron Street in Toronto, Ontario. By the time it closed in January 1932, the Home had moved to 28 Hazelton Lanes. The other Home, called the Winnipeg Babies' Home located in Winnipeg, Manitoba was opened for infants and toddlers in 1909 but closed after two years of operation in 1911.

In all, through the five Receiving Homes in Canada, it is estimated that 10,000 children were sent here through the Church of England's participation in the child migrant scheme.



The Parisian *continued*



The second remarkable instance in the life of the *Parisian* was its proximity to the *Titanic* disaster. The *Parisian* had travelled the same route just twelve hours prior and her Captain Hains reported that the icebergs were very thick and in the hundreds. Another steamer, The *Carpathia*, had passed on the same route and both ships had exchanged notes on the ice and altered their courses with that information.

When the *Titanic* hit the iceberg and SOS signals for help went out, the *Parisian's* wireless operator had retired for the night. The ship's crew had been extremely busy that day, trying to pick up the *Deutschland*, which was drifting without coal. By the time the Captain Hains heard about the disaster, the *Parisian* had already reached harbour.

In the 33 years of her service, she connected Great Britain to various destinations in North America until she was scrapped in 1914 by ship breakers in Italy.

AMSTERDAM
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The Amsterdam Brewery and the British Home Child Group International are proud to present a screening of Eleanor McGrath's 'Forgotten' on Tuesday May 16 in their event room. Doors open at 6:30 pm and screening begins at 7 pm. Panel discussion to follow film. Limited \$10 tickets may be purchased by e-transfer or cheque. If available, cash only at the door. Parking is free!

Coffee, tea and beer sampling included. Wine or beer may be purchased.

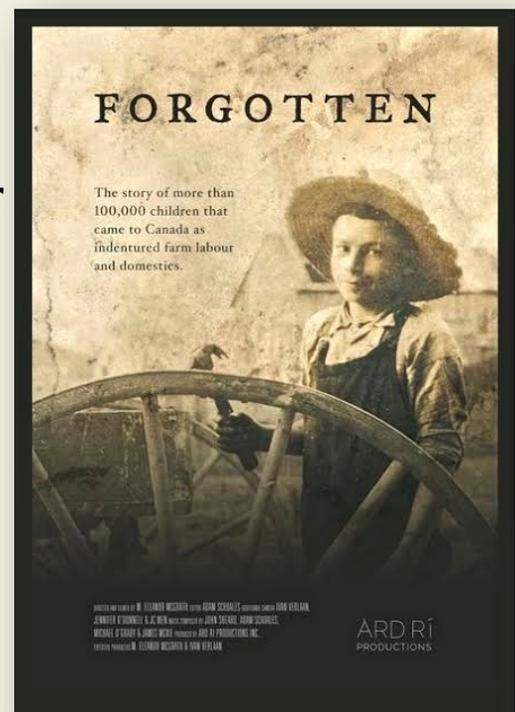
Cheques should be submitted to:

British Home Child Group International

97 Dagmar Avenue

Toronto, Ontario M4M 1V9

Extensive British Home Child artifacts on display.





Our new [apology petition](#) is up and running! Please note we can sign this petition even if we have signed a previous one! Anyone who is a Canadian Citizen or Resident can sign!



Have you seen our YouTube presentation on [British Home Children?](#)



British Home Child Group International

By email: connect@britishhomechild.com
 By regular mail: 97 Dagmar Ave., Toronto, ON, M4M 1V9
 Our website: www.britishhomechild.com
 To book a speaker: sandrajoyce@rogers.com

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