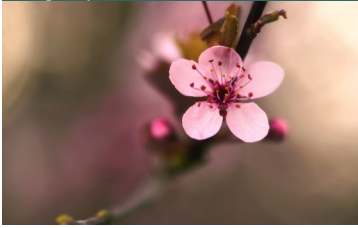


April, 2016



# *British Home Child Group International*

**Forgotten—the documentary** by M. Eleanor McGrath, Director

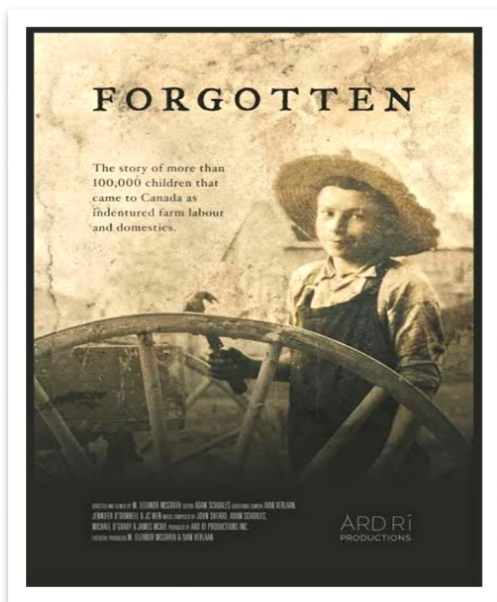


Photo Credit ArdRi Productions

In October 2011, I walked south on one of Toronto's toughest streets, George Street. Once the home of the wealthy in the 19th century now filled with the homeless and marginalized of Toronto, I wanted to walk through an area of the city that I knew was significant architecturally. Only when I came to a Georgian home surrounded by construction hoarding that I realized an important part of Toronto's heritage might be lost. I called the Heritage Department and began an email campaign; it was going well until October 19th there was a 3-Alarm fire that gutted the once former residence of the "Fegan Home for the Distribution of Boys". This story found me.

The journey to uncover the story of the Fegan Home and the Boys that were distributed" took me across Canada and to

Ireland in search of the history of the over 100,000 children that came to Canada from 1850s to 1939 as British Home Children. This is the forgotten history of Canada, the lost memories of these children that are only unleashed after they are gone and discovered by their descendants. The more I began to understand the motivations for child migration to Canada and to meet the men who came as British Home Children, the more I knew that this was a story that should not be forgotten.

Following two years of research, interviews, travel and then two years of postproduction, the documentary, *Forgotten* captures some of the stories of the last remaining British Home Children in Canada. The men interviewed are now in their 90s, sadly two of the interviewed subjects have died since I met them. However, it is the children of these descendants who are left searching for who their parent was and why they were sent to Fegan's, Barnardo's and other institutions before they were shipped to Canada. These descendants are in need of answers and many now struggle with the knowledge of the hardships that these British Home Children endured as farm labour often abused as slaves. Some of the descendants are seeking an apology from the Canadian government, which has eluded the British Home Children for years, despite both the

British and Australian Governments providing restitution and an apology. Most agree that Canada must acknowledge the tremendous contribution made by the British Home Children to our country.

*Forgotten* shares personal stories of both the British Home Children and descendants living across Canada along with commentary by the former Barnardo's Director of After Care, Collette Bradford. Ms. Bradford fought to open the records of 350,000 children to the families in the 1990's but this was already when the majority of children were dead or very senior. Quoting from Ms. Bradford, "How dare we keep these records from these children!" Along with original and never seen before photographs, footage the viewer will discover a story of child labour still untold and largely forgotten, until now. As I prepare for the 8th Film Festival to screen "Forgotten", it has been an incredible journey with the support of all those who were interviewed, the researchers who shared their knowledge and the archives for photographs and footage and the special team of my editor Adam Schoales, and Executive Producer Ivan Verlaan and the talented musicians and colleagues who helped me every step of the way.

*Continued on page 2.....*

## Forgotten—the documentary *continued*



Photo Credit: Griffin Morse

As an independent filmmaker who has no personal connection to the British Home Children, it has been an honour to document and share this story with all those who have attended the screenings in Los Angeles, London England, Chicago, Toronto and Hamilton. Recently, in Chicago during the Question and Answer period, Ali Thompson (Fegan's descendant) and myself were asked by the astounded moderator "Why hasn't Canada done more for these children?" As Canadians, we have so much to learn about our nation's history and to insist that the text books are rewritten to teach the generations to come about these incredible children. My work will continue to promote the memories of the British Home Children and hopefully with future funding the archived materials of all interviews and original documents will form a further resource for students. A final note on the journey of making ***Forgotten*** is that 295 George Street is thankfully mothballed" by the City of Toronto as it restores and revitalizes Seaton House and its service to the homeless of our

city. The preservation of the "Fegan Home for the Distribution of Boys" will be undertaken in the future and the history of the building will not be forgotten.

**Upcoming Film Screening** The next Film Festival screening of *Forgotten* will be at the Art Gallery of Hamilton's ILOVEFILM series on Saturday, April 23rd at 4:00pm. Tickets can be purchased at:

[http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com/wo\\_agh\\_film\\_series.php](http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com/wo_agh_film_series.php)

There will be a Jolly Bus Tour leaving on Saturday morning from Cornwall, Ontario to attend the screening along with special stops and speakers to greet the group along the way. Sandra Joyce, Quarrier's Descendant, author and advocate will meet with the group at Queen's Park and then off to 295 George Street with Eleanor McGrath, director. To join the group and tour please contact Carol at:

<http://jollytours.ca/portfolio/forgotten/>



Photo Credit: M Eleanor McGrath

*Eleanor McGrath, is a wife and mother of four children living and working in Toronto and is a part-time farmer in Apple Hill, Ontario*

*Eleanor works as a fundraising consultant with the Jesuits in English Canada and is a volunteer Trustee of the Ireland Canada University Scholarship Fund. Her passion as an independent filmmaker was realized when she left a career on Bay Street five years ago and picked up her first camera....Eleanor has not looked back! Her award winning documentary films are **Kanata: An Irish Story**, **ALIVE FROM THE DIVIS FLATS** and **Forgotten**. She is author of **A STORY TO BE TOLD** and writes scripts, articles and is working on her next documentary web series for completion in 2017.*

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

### A Review of ***Forgotten***

***Forgotten*** is a poignant and moving film recounting the story of the British Home Child movement through personal interviews with those who, without choice, were participants and with their descendants. The film provides a keen insight into what these children experienced, acknowledging and recognising their significant contribution to Canada. It must be seen to appreciate the huge upheaval and emotional turmoil that these children went through, the impact that it has had on their lives, and the lives of their families. It is indeed a story that must not be forgotten.

David Waller.

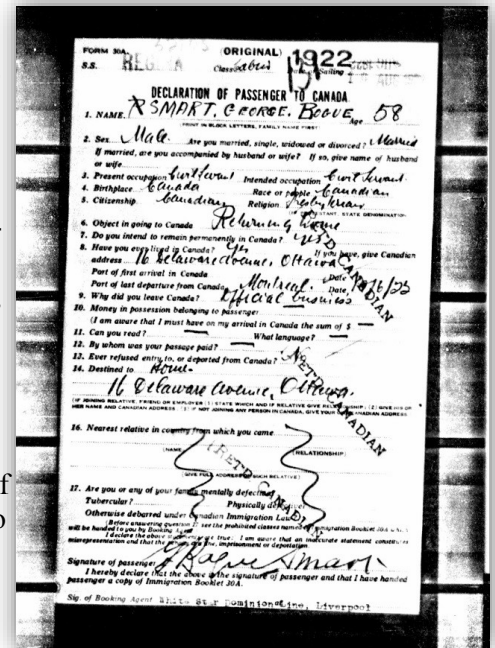
## George Bogue Smart by Sandra Joyce

In 1900, the government of the Dominion of Canada felt it necessary to create a supervisory position to monitor the immigration of British children, in an attempt to address the rising tide of negative public opinion that had been instigated by the release of the critical Doyle Report in 1874.

Despite the Act to Regulate the Immigration into Ontario of Certain Classes of Children (which was followed by similar acts in Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia) in 1897 and the appointment of J. J. Kelso in Ontario as Secretary of Neglected and Dependent Children, more and more people felt that the children were being improperly placed and supervised. Furthermore, the official concern, as expressed by Arthur Hardy, then premier of Ontario, was that such immigration practices would result in the moral or physical deterioration of Canadians.

On Jan. 1, 1900, George Bogue Smart, a Baptist from Brockville, Ontario, formerly employed by Molson's Bank, was appointed the Inspector of British Immigrant Children and Receiving Homes. This position was under the auspices of the Immigration Branch, a section of the Interior Department. As applications to indenture children as domestic servants or farm labourers far exceeded the children being immigrated, Smart firmly believed that child migration benefited both the immigrant children and the Empire. Any flaws in the policies, he thought, could be improved with new regulations.

At the beginning of his term as inspector, he reported the average age of girls being immigrated was ten and boys were twelve. He also noted that some of the children were placed out on verbal agreements and strongly recommended that all agreements should be written. At the age of 18, the contracts and the agent's responsibilities for the children's placements should end. He frequently visited Britain to attend conferences with Reformatory and Refuge unions and established close ties to the agencies sending children to Canada. Sometimes, he accompanied children's groups back to Canada. *Continued on page 4.....*



The British Home Child Group International's Community Exhibit at Ontario's Provincial Parliament, Queen's Park is up and running. It is our hope that many visitors on the frequent daily tours and all MPPs and their visitors will view it and connect with the British Home Child Story.



## George Bogue Smart *continued*

Smart's findings were published by the Department of the Interior, the Dominion of Canada, annually. His reports focused on the types of children being imported, the placement practices of each organization, and how the child labourers were being treated. They also included the amount of children coming into the country and from which organization and the areas in Britain they were coming from.

In spite of this, few improvements were made, at first, to the children's living and working conditions. Schooling, even though required in the terms of their indenture, was sporadic. If at all, it was more likely to take place in the winter months when less work was required on the farms. However, under the Laurier and Borden governments, Smart was given more latitude to expand his supervision. The smaller agencies were urged to follow the lead of the larger agencies in providing better placements and better receiving homes. Should a placement not work out, he expected there should be a receiving home that children could return to. Inspectors were encouraged to follow British Local Government Board regulations for 'boarding out' children and to ensure that the welfare of the child was their primary objective.

*The catastrophic naval disaster of the Empress of Ireland claimed 1,078 lives from the 1,475 aboard on May 28th, 1914. One of the 397 survivors was 50-year-old G. Bogue Smart, Inspector of British Immigrant Children and Receiving Homes, who was on his way to accompany a party of British Home Children to Canada.*

Physical examinations were carried out before embarkation and again, at the port of entry to ensure good mental and physical health. Particular attention was paid to unappealing infectious skin and eye diseases, which were conspicuous and detrimental to the image of the immigrant children.

Smart's reports were carefully monitored by the British Board of Guardians and in the mid-1920s, more than sixty members sent matching resolutions to the Canadian High Commissioner with their demand to make it mandatory that all receiving homes be examined and frequently monitored.

In 1924, no unaccompanied children under the age of 14 were permitted to enter the country as per a Government order-in-council and by 1928, the immigration of school-age children became disallowed.

These inhibiting policies and the depression era were largely responsible for bringing the importation of children labourers to an end although small numbers of children continued to be sent through the 1940s.

Smart remained in his position until 1933.



We are very excited to announce that our official House of Commons Apology e-petition e257 is now ready to be signed online. It will be open for 120 days. Signatories can be Canadian citizens living in Canada or abroad OR Canadian residents.

<https://petitions.parl.gc.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-257>

## Upcoming Events

Esquesing Historical Society

April 13 @ 7:30p-9:30pm

Streetsville Historical Society

April 14th @ 7:30-9:30pm

York Grand River Historical Society

April 19 @ 7:00pm-9:pm

Halton-Peel Ontario Genealogical Society  
Branch

April 24th @ 2:00pm-4:00pm

Montreal's Atwater Library

April 28 @ 12:30-1:30pm

Connect Charter School

May 2 @ 9:00am-11:00am

The Manor Village at Garrison Woods

May 2 @ 1:30pm-2:30pm

Canadian Federation of Women—Calgary

May 2 @ 7:00pm-9:00pm

Knights of the Round Table

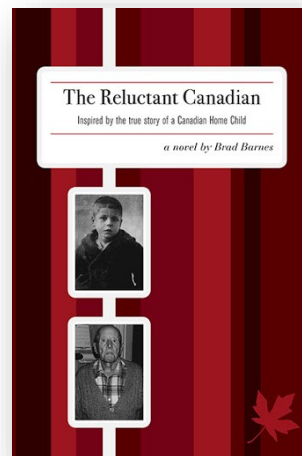
May 3 @ 11:30am-1:00pm

Calgary Library—Signal Hill Branch

May 3 @ 7:00pm-8:30pm

Probus Club Brampton

May 18 @ 10:00am-12:00pm



Member Hazel Perrier, who lives in Claresholm, Alberta will be showing the Alberta quilt at our May 3rd presentation at Calgary Library's Signal Hill branch. Hazel says that many descendants plan to attend including Brad Barnes, who is the author of a book called 'The Reluctant Canadian'. We are hoping, if all's well, to see British Home Child John Vallance!



*British Home Child Group  
International*

Stay in Touch!

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