

July, 2016



British Home Child Group International

James Paterson by Sandra Joyce



Born in Ayr, Scotland in June 1908, James Paterson was sent to Canada by the Orphan Homes of Scotland (Quarrier's) in 1923 at the age of thirteen.

"I was 13 and weighed 84 pounds when I came...quite a hired man! They just shipped me out and I had no say in the matter. I was most scared and I didn't know where in the hell I was going and I didn't know anything about Canada. I never saw snow until I came here, but have been putting up with it all these years. I stayed with Jack and Stella Hinton in Rocksprings for seven years, working 16 hours a day for \$4 a month. I loved the work. Stella fed me well and fussed over me. I called her mother. I never married, maybe because I'm too

damn particular! I didn't get the one I wanted, so I said the heck with them all!" said Jimmy Paterson in 1997.

From 1953, he worked at Brockville Psychiatric Hospital until his retirement in 1973. On August 1997, two memorials were unveiled in Athens Memorial Park. James Paterson had them made to honour the children who arrived from the Quarrier and Barnardo Homes in Great Britain.



Mr. Paterson wanted to be sure that these children were not forgotten. Each monument has a picture and a plaque. One has a reproduction of a black and white photograph of a group of children at the Fairknowe Home in Brockville.

Fairknowe was the first destination in Canada for many, including Mr. Paterson. The inscription notes that they came to be known as Canada's Little Slaves.

A colour painting of an immigrant homestead adorns the other depicting the 100 acre farms that so many were placed on. The words pay tribute to the immigrants that worked hard clearing the land and raising their families. He died in August, 1997.



Four British Home Children Remembered by Judy Neville



Photo Credit Jim Brownell

On Wednesday, June 22, 2016 I, Judy Neville visited Grosse Ile in the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. This is a Parks Canada Site and is also known as Grosse Isle and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site.

In 1832 the government of Lower Canada set up a station on the island to examine the immigrants arriving from over seas. It was believed that these new comers were carrying contagious diseases such as typhus. People were also quarantined for chicken-pox, eye infections, etc. After Confederation in 1867, Canada continued to use this island as the first stop for people arriving by ship. The facilities and equipment were improved and continued to be upgraded as things changes over the years. Grosse Ile continued as a quarantine station from 1832 to 1932 when it was closed. Hundreds of thousands of people passed through this station on their way to Canada.

As of today, it is known that only four of the people buried on the island, of which there were some 5000, were British Home Children. These were boys who arrived from England on the SS Montcalm from Liverpool in 1922. On May 19, 1922 they left Liverpool and the ship they were on arrived in Quebec on May 27, 1922.

These boys signed their 30A Landing Card and after going through the quarantine process the four boys were detained on Grosse Ile, and the rest of the party carried on to Quebec and then onto Ottawa by train. It was not recorded why the boys were detained.

It is known that sometime after the boys were detained they found a boat by the island and rowed to their deaths. They all drowned accidentally, in the St. Lawrence River on June 4, 1922.

Their bodies were recovered and Father H. Nicole officiated at their burial on Grosse Isle. There was no known grave marker for them at the time of death. They were buried in the East Cemetery.

Much of the East Cemetery is under the island's airstrip today. Their names are etched into a huge glass memorial wall and are the only deaths recorded for 1922.

They were as follows: William Ellis age 13, William Mahon age 15, John Brier age 14 and James Holland age 12.



Photo Credit Judy Neville

The Tunisian by Sandra Joyce



Built in Glasgow, the Allan Line's Tunisian made her maiden voyage in 1900 traveling from Liverpool to Halifax and Portland, Maine. A month later, her first of many trips to Quebec, Montreal, Halifax and Portland began. Over a period of 21 years, she carried over 2,000 British Home Children to their destinations in Canada.

The Tunisian boasted refrigeration, good heating and ventilation. It also had hot and cold, fresh and salt water on tap and four-birth emigrant cabins with spring mattresses. In 1912, five days before the Titanic sank, the Tunisian reported heavy ice in the area that was to become the site

of the disaster. The Tunisian was travelling eastbound at this time from St. John, New Brunswick to Liverpool.

The Tunisian's most noteworthy trip however was on Oct. 3, 1914 when she was part of the 1st Canadian Division, Canadian Expeditionary Force convoy that included seven warship escorts and 32 transport ships. The Troopships were divided into three columns. The Tunisian was in the middle and transported HQ staff (1st CIB), 3rd Battalion (Toronto), 1st CIB and #3 Field Ambulance for a total of 1,412 troops. She also carried 37,086 sacks of flour.

Rear-Admiral Hugh Pullen, RCN spoke about the operation: "The total figures for the First Contingent are well worth remembering: 1,547 officers, 29,070 men, 7,679 horses, 70 guns, 110 motor vehicles, 705 horsed vehicles and 82 bicycles - a most impressive force for any small nation to raise in less than two months. They were all volunteers and worthy representatives of Canada. I trust that the spirit that inspired them still burns in their grandsons."



In 1915, she served for some time as a German POW accommodation ship at the Isle of Wight and then was used further as a troop carrier. 1917 saw her ownership passed over to the Canadian Pacific along with the Allan line itself. CP Ships was a large Canadian shipping company established in the 19th century. From the late 1880s until after World War II, the company was Canada's largest operator of Atlantic and Pacific steamships.

In 1920, the Tunisian was changed to cabins and third class accommodation (310-cabin and 736-3rd class passengers), converted to oil fuel in 1921 - and in 1922 was renamed Marburn. She remained in service until 1927, sailing from Liverpool, Glasgow, Hamburg, Antwerp and London at various times. She made her final transatlantic sailing, from Antwerp to St. John, New Brunswick, in April 1928, and was scrapped that fall.

Round the province and back again, Petition Tabling and DNA!

The Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS) annual conference held in Toronto this year was a great success for the British Home Child Group International, doing many free genealogical searches and meeting a lot of very interested people. Our presentation on our DNA database, called Final Frontier, sponsored by the OGS British Home Child Special Interest Group, was met with notable enthusiasm. We were also able to secure the assistance of Dr. Maurice Gleeson, a well-known international DNA specialist from London, England, to be our mentor and co-administrator for this project.

Our British Home Child DNA project on [FamilyTree DNA](#) is meant to be used as another tool in a genealogical kit to verify information and/or as a database where people join – they may find a match and connect with family they have been looking for. DNA may also be uploaded to the site from AncestryDNA and 23andme. Please check our website for information. www.britishhomechild.com.



June also saw the [fifth tabling of the British Home Child Petition in the House of Commons](#). Liberal MP Judy Sgro, P. C. submitted it in front of assembled MPs. Our [petition](#) will be online until July 28. Please 'sign' it if you haven't already done so.

June also saw us going from Windsor, Ontario where the Essex County Branch did a live YouTube webcast to three libraries at the other end of the province in the area around Cornwall. Lively discussion was held with those in attendance. It was great to have Jim Brownell and his sister Judy Neville add to the discussion. Jim is the former MPP of Stormont, Dundas and South Glengarry, who was the driving factor behind the passing of the British Home Child Day in Ontario Act.

Perth was another destination for a presentation in June as the Annual Lanark County Heritage Bus Tour stopped for lunch there to listen to our British Home Child presentation.





British Home Child Group International

The British Home Child Group International, in collaboration with Fanshawe Pioneer Village in London, Ontario, are excited to present British Home Child Day on October 1st & 2nd, 2016. Admission is free for the event as part of Doors Open London and Culture Days.

Mark the dates in your calendar!!



British Home Child Group International

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