

From the 1860s to the late 1930s the Government of Canada as well as Australia sanctioned indentured servitude of children from Britain as a prolonged strategy to address labour shortages in the colonies. Cloaked in philanthropic good intentions, the Home Children scheme relieved British ratepayers from taking responsibility for widespread poverty and for children caught in that disadvantage.

Decades later, with surviving home children and their families present, official apologies were issued by the governments of Australia (in 2009) and Britain (in 2010). The Government of Canada has yet to apologize. The government of Prime Minister Steven Harper instead proclaimed 2010 the Year of the British Home Child. A commemorative Canada Post stamp was produced.

The stamp features images of boys as men. In the foreground a boy is dressed for emigration in a full-length double-breasted Melton coat with matching hat and polished leather boots. Perhaps the boots are a size or two too big. In the background another boy is seen in the act of settler farming. Like my grandfather Henry Frederick Terry, the boy on the stamp works a horse-drawn plough on his own. His small body is shown ably cutting the soil, in the direction of the horizon at the Barnardo Industrial Farm near Russell, Manitoba. The pastoral view belies the perilous work of early twentieth century farming reliant as it was on the labour of these disadvantaged children.



"Home Children / Petits immigrants anglais" 2010 commemorative Canada Post stamp

The Library and Archives Canada writes the official history of British Home Children this way,

Between 1869 and 1932, over 100,000 children were sent from Britain to Canada through assisted juvenile emigration. These migrants are called "home children" because most went from an emigration agency's home for children in Britain to its Canadian receiving home. The children were placed with families in rural Canada.

The facts, the postage stamp, and the government's declaration of 2010, obscure the stigma carried by thousands of immigrants and their now multi-generational families. My grandfather's family of origin was caught in a confluence of factors that tore them apart. Contracted at age fourteen to work on a rural farm in Ontario, Fred faced a destiny that starkly contrasted to life in overcrowded London. He made a life that included contact,

Henry Frederick Terry (1907-1980) ~ *I Remember*

By Ginger Mason

despite agency discouragement, with his brothers (Joseph, Alfred, and Richard Jr) who were also immigrants in the home children program. The brothers together, in turn, later supported the immigration to Canada of their father (Richard Terry) and three half-siblings (Reginald, Florence, and Mary). My grandfather was from a generation that didn't talk much about their personal histories, marked as they were for him and many others by shame, embarrassment, regret, sorrow, and trauma. This memoir is an attempt to record the story of my grandfather's boyhood experience as a home child and how it impacted his life and the formation of our family.

It is evident from published records that home children weren't

held back by a rigid class system. As far as I know he never said, one way or the other, but perhaps no one asked.

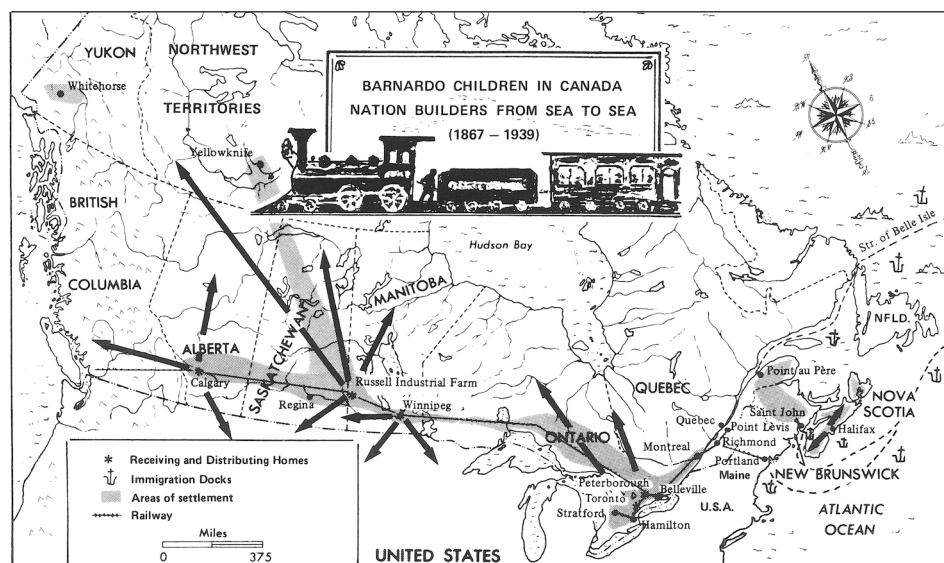
Harrison's *The Home Children—Their Personal Stories* recount with admiration the British Home Children programs administered by Annie MacPherson, Thomas John Barnardo, Mr. and Mrs. Merry, who Fred Terry knew, and others. But virtually every first-person entry in these books describe hardship and in many cases abuse of children. These ranged from unpleasant personal dynamics and neglect to physical assault and fatalities. Commonly recounted was how home children were typically denied access to school, staying behind to assist with farm operations while the hosts' own children of the same age attended. Franci Louann's *Charlie Henry Workman (1897-1976) ~ The Unspoken*, another Reading the Migration Library artist book from 2017, recounts

Henry Frederick Terry (1907-1980) ~ *I Remember* is an artist book comprised of this broadsheet, a booklet, a postcard, and a postage stamp. They have been assembled by Ginger Mason. Concept and editing by Lois Klassen. Design by Deanne Achong. Copy editing by Kriss Boggild.

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Map image is from Gail H. Corbett, *Nation Builders: Barnardo Children in Canada*, Dundurn Press Limited, 2002. Reprinted with permission from the publisher.

always welcome in Canada. The treatment they received ranged from exceeding kindness to unbelievable cruelty. Published stories retell shared commonalities: the separation from family and country, the culture shock of landing on a remote farm in a much harsher climate, the loneliness of being placed among strangers, inadequate food, rough or shoddy clothing and sleeping quarters, dangerous labour conditions, and the lack of consistent protection and oversight by the immigration agencies to whom their wellbeing and guardianship was delegated, to name a few. Gail H. Corbett's book, *Nation Builders – Barnardo Children in Canada* and Phyllis

how her father's home child experiences remained unspeakable. Louann writes, "[hundreds of] thousand[s] came to Canada over sixty years— 'only the flower of the flock'—healthy, with sharp eyesight and good teeth. Dr. Barnardo visited Canada several times but could not have known how badly the children here were being treated." I am proud of my grandfather's character, his skills and achievements, and the life he built for himself in Canada despite early hardship. Only Fred, though, would be able to judge whether he had experienced a better life in Canada than he would have if he remained in the urban slums of Britain, trapped in poverty, and

held back by a rigid class system. As far as I know he never said, one way or the other, but perhaps no one asked.

Why do I want to tell this story? Partly to banish stigma from my grandfather's early life by casting loving light on what little I do know of his life and his migration story. Also, I want to understand the forces impacting my own and my mother's character and destinies. In three generations, for instance, the mothers in my family were not available to the children they bore. I am drawn to learn more about how that affected my grandfather and his children.

My grandfather's experiences are also important to remember for the way they reveal systemic instrumentalizing of children in the colonial project that run through the stories that this country tells. During massive colonial and agricultural expansion in Canada and Australia, Barnardo's services fostered both children, and the settlement of Canada with white and non-Indigenous labourers. This legacy of administering the movement and placement of children as agricultural labourers and colonists sits in the background of the trafficking of Indigenous children into and out of Indian Residential Schools, Indian Hospitals, sometimes as non-consenting research subjects, and to private homes as orphans, wards of the state, foster kids, and adoptees through the "sixties scoop" and other colonial exploitation and assimilation schemes.

Thanks to records and memories passed on to me by my mother Eleanor, Fred's second daughter, I have some of my grandfather's story. And I am also indebted to Fred's daughter, my Aunt Freda, for the rich treasure trove of photos and memories she shared with me. The records we've uncovered include archival information obtained from the Family History Service of the UK-based Barnardo's organization. As the central repository for archives, Barnardo's holds migration records for about a hundred thousand children who

migrated to Canada and Australia. Putting together this publication is a way to pay homage to my mother's persistence in assembling documents over many years. Her efforts seemed motivated by a deep longing to understand her father's early life. According to Mom and her sister Freda, my grandfather's only reference to his early home child life was, "Terrible, terrible." But I acknowledge that our family's recollections and documents indicate that there seem to have been some positive aspects of the experiences, even in that terrible time. Fred's inner life, his deepest feelings, thoughts, dreams, and desires, are at this point unknowable. I wonder though if it is possible to read the historic records and archival material and extrapolate its relevance on grandfather and the rest of us. Some details are available for me as pieces of stories and snapshots in time. Storytelling, whether oral or written, offers a powerful way to connect us, to make sense of the world, and to transmit knowledge, values, and beliefs. By considering my grandfather's story and pictures through my own feminist and social justice lenses I am gaining a nuanced appreciation of his life and my family history.

Even though he did not speak about or share details of his life and the lives of other home children, our family has learned of their lives and their circumstances. Together, we remember. I remember Grandpa Fred Terry, and children who are to this day trafficked and caught in traumatic or failed migrations and dislocations. We remember.

I remember
it takes more than
one person to remember.

That's why the word has
member in it –

Isabella Wang
(from the book *Pebble Swing*, 2021)

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Editor's Note

The story of Henry Frederick Terry, Ginger Mason's grandfather, is an account of a family's strength in the face of government-sanctioned third-party migration of children to rural Canada. The intergenerational impact of policies that removed children from disadvantaged families into the care of agencies with mandates to support colonialism, and the resilience of Fred Terry's siblings and offspring who were caught in those circumstances, is lovingly recounted here. As an artist book in the Reading the Migration Library project Fred Terry's story is presented (like others in the project) in the form of a small mailable packet. A postage stamp and postcard contained in the packet link it to postal systems. These references are a tribute to Fred Terry's letter-writing practice and to Ginger Mason's own interest in mailed correspondences. Ginger explained to me how despite Fred Terry having very limited access to education her grandfather was an avid letter writer throughout his farm placements, sending regular correspondence to agency officials and his scattered family members. He successfully completed immigration applications for his half-siblings and father. Fred was the one who administered all family business including Christmas cards. A transcription of one of young Fred's letters to his guardian Mrs. Merry is in the booklet. In the letter he complains about harsh emotional conditions of his placement in Canada. A subsequent letter indicating that he will "stay on a while longer" is excerpted on the postcard. Deepening the link between Ginger and Fred's letter writing is her previous experience as a Canada Post letter carrier. Like many "posties" Ginger took an interest in the aesthetics of stamps. She even designed and produced several of her own through International Art Post, an "artistamp" printing service offered by the legendary mail art maven, Anna Banana. Ginger and I met during her letter carrying days when my own mail art project,

Renegade Library was described on national radio (CBC, 1998). Upon hearing that I was actively exchanging mail art Ginger took the initiative to reach out by sending me a packet of mail art. Since then we have continued to exchange art and ephemera, and have become close friends. When the commemorative home children stamp (featured in this publication) was issued in 2010, Ginger had the foresight to purchase enough to include in a future mail art publication that would mark her grandfather's story and its impact on her and her family.

Thank you, Ginger Mason and the Terry family, for sharing this story through Reading the Migration Library. I am humbled by the trust and effort you have put in this publication, and the honour it offers to the life of Henry Frederick Terry.

Lois Klassen

Light Factory Publications is grateful to produce artists books on the unceded and traditional territories of the x^mməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations.