

# OPEONGO LINES

No 3 September 1998

Editor: Sandra Mercer

*Preserving Yesterday for Tomorrow*

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The Lorentes in London

*The Voice of Heritage Renfrew*

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*.....and More*

*Heritage Renfrew is a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to preserving, enhancing, recognizing and sharing the history and culture of Renfrew and area.*

### **GENEALOGY ON THE WEB**

Heritage Renfrew & Renfrew Archives:

<http://www.renc.igs.net/~renarch>

National Archives of Canada:

<http://www.archives.ca>

National Library of Canada:

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ehome.htm>

Quebec Government Archives:

<http://www.ang.gouv.qc.ca>

The Genealogy Home Page:

<http://genhomepage.com>

Irish Family History Foundation:

<http://www.mayo-ireland.ie/roots.htm>

The Irish Ancestral Research Foundation (TIARA)

<http://world.std.com/~ahern/links.html>

JewishGen: The Home Page of Jewish Genealogy

<http://www.jewishgen.org>

Palatines to America:

<http://genealogy.org/~palam>

Olive Tree (Germans, Loyalists, etc.):

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~ote>

French Canadian: <http://www.cam.org/>

[~beaur/gen/welcome.html](http://www.cam.org/~beaur/gen/welcome.html)

Virtual Museum of New France:

<http://www.cmcc.muse.digital.ca/mnf/mnfeng.html>

list compiled by Lorraine Gosselin

### HERITAGE RENFREW GENEALOGY SEMINAR

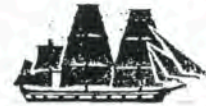
OCTOBER 3 1998

10.00 AM--4.30 PM

RENFREW PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH KIRK HALL

REGISTRATION TIME 9.00AM



HOSTED BY HERITAGE RENFREW

### **Genealogy Seminar on October 3:**

Heritage Renfrew Director Olga Lewis, who has been holding genealogy classes for several months, has organized a genealogy seminar with a program that should appeal to many researchers and to individuals exploring family roots.

The seminar, to be held on Saturday, October 3, begins with registration at 9:00 a.m. At 10:00 a.m., Patricia Trudel and Brenda Bowman from Ottawa will discuss Genealogical Resources at the L.D.S. Lunch and a "market place" break is from noon to 1:00 p.m. At 1:00 p.m., Dave and Kay Lorente of Heritage Renfrew will provide information on Home Children and at 2:30 p.m., Jack Schecter, former Librarian of Upper Canada Village, Smith Falls, will discuss Preserving Documents & Genealogical Tips. Each session will be followed by a question period. The event finishes at 4 p.m.✻

### Home Children Message Hitting Home

Seeds sown by Dave and Kay Lorente, Heritage Renfrew's Home Children Canada Committee, are yielding fruit.

When British Prime Minister Blair announced last year that a parliamentary committee would investigate Britain's role and responsibilities regarding Child Migrants sent from Britain, Dave Lorente, alarmed that Australian Home Children were the focus and that Canada's Home Children did not appear to be included, submitted a 51-page 'brief' with numerous recommendations. As a result, Dave and Kay were invited to appear before the Health Select All-Party Committee on 20 May 1998, in the British House of Commons.

Although the Lorente's received no financial assistance, they took the trip to Great Britain to ensure that the concerns of Canada's Home Children and their descendants would be represented.

Home Children and their descendants in Canada are not seeking financial compensation or apologies; they are seeking freer access to official documents as well as recognition of the difficulties they experienced. Many home children were denied official papers. While it is true that some were treated very well, many were lied to about their situation; many were mistreated or abused and some even murdered by families who used them as a source of cheap labour; most were separated from parents and even from siblings who were sent to Canada or Australia at the same time; and virtually all bore the stigma of being called "street arabs", waifs, strays or guttersnipes.

Approximately 100,000 children were sent to Canada between 1869 and 1939 under a child migration policy designed to reduce overpopulation caused by the Industrial Revolution, to increase British stock in the colonies and to alleviate the financial and social burden of caring for the poor.

None of the participants at the British committee hearing got to make a presentation, but the Lorentes responded to numerous questions and followed the

### ROOTS

Can you help these searchers from outside this province find their roots in the area? (Searchers on left; searchees on right)

Van Dette, Ron,  
California, USA

Van Dette

Howard, Terris C.,  
Seattle, WA., USA

Anderson, Wallace,  
Storie, Crane  
McCallum, Fisher

conference with another lengthy 'brief'. They also made good use of their trip by meeting with appropriate agencies, giving interviews to the BBC and The Times of London, and meeting with a British government policy official, who made some concessions concerning access to records on Home Children.

Although the impact of the 20 May conference and the representation of Canada's Home Children at that conference has yet to be fully determined, recent extensive press coverage indicates that the shameful story of the child migration policy is coming to light.

As a result of the tabling of the British committee's report, several articles have appeared in The Citizen and in national media. One article notes that the major focus of the British investigation is Australia, where child migrants were sent until 1967 and that some Australians are seeking compensation and threatening lawsuits. Canadian Home Children insist "All we want is to have access to our records." The Committee's apparent lack of interest in the plight of Canadian Home Children may be the result of statements by Margaret Humphreys of the U.K. Child Migrants Trust. She claims that Canadian Home Children are too old to warrant help.

According to another article, the British

parliamentary report describes the former child migration policy as a costly mistake, in human terms, which "plunged many children into lives of hard labour, abuse and loneliness that scarred them for life".

In "Giving 'home children' a past", The Citizen's Juliet O'Neill describes how Dave Lorente gradually uncovered the story of his own father's past as a home boy, the sense of shame that prevented his father from discussing it until late in life, the difficulty Dave had in locating his father's birth certificate (his father's home child records were burned in England) and the efforts of Dave and Kay during the past eight years to assist other Home Children by helping them locate personal records, by facilitating reunions to help reduce the stigma and by informing the public about an aspect of history that has been suppressed.

As a result of these activities and the current investigation by the British government, there is new hope that Home Children and their descendants can recover their past and, therefore, their sense of identity. It is also our past—and our identity.

Home Children Canada Committee:

Dave Lorente (chair) or Kay Lorente: 613/432-2486  
e-mail: lorente@renc.igs.net \*

The British government report by the Parliamentary Committee Investigating Child Trafficking can be found on the Internet at:

<http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm199798/cmselect/cmhealth/755/75501.htm>



The above plaque was erected by the Ontario Heritage Foundation at the former St. George's Home (Holy Rosary Parish) at 1153 Wellington Street in Ottawa on June 14 of this year, during a Home Children reunion featuring guest speakers from the United Kingdom. The wording of the plaque is as follows:

#### HOME CHILDREN

*"Beginning in 1869, British Charitable Societies removed children from slums and orphanages in congested industrial cities and brought them to Canada to serve as cheap farm and domestic labour. 'Homes' were set up across the country to house the girls and boys until they were placed in service. Monitoring of the children after placement was superficial, leaving them susceptible to mistreatment. Child emigration was discontinued in the 1930s when the Great Depression created a labour surplus in Canada. By then, up to 100,000 children had been transported. This building, formerly known as St. George's Home, was one of many distribution centres in Ontario." \**

### More Home Children Activities:

In July, Dave and Kay Lorente of Heritage Renfrew's Home Children Canada Committee chaired a panel discussion on child migration during a four-day conference at the University of Liverpool. While in Europe and the United Kingdom, the Lorentes also visited various archives and Quarriers Homes, formerly known as the Orphan Homes of Scotland.

The Barnardos will be with Home Children Canada in September to host *informal reunion parties* in Toronto, Peterborough and Tillsonburg, as follows:

- September 12-13 (Saturday & Sunday) noon to 6:00 p.m., Novotel in North York, Toronto
- September 14 (Monday, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., North Broadway Baptist Church, Tillsonburg
- September 19 (Saturday) noon to 4:00 p.m., Peterborough Christian Fellowship Hall, 300 Milroy Drive, Peterborough \*

Barnardos on the Internet:

<<http://www.barnardos.org.uk>>

### More Home Children Projects:

Besides attempting to respond to a mountain of mail and media attention since the British parliamentary committee tabled its report on its former child migration policy, the Heritage Renfrew Home Children Canada Committee is lobbying for:

- Canada Post to issue a stamp commemorating Home Children;
- provinces and territories to include a unit on Home Children in school curricula;
- Pier 21 (an immigration shed in Halifax opening as an education centre in 2000) to include a display and plaque on Home Children;
- a documentary Home Child film to be produced for national/international television;

- a book on/by Home Children to be published;
- the Canadian Government to take tangible and positive steps to help Home Children and their descendants find their roots.

Preparations are already underway for next year's Home Children reunion and possibly one in Winnipeg.

Heritage Renfrew's Home Children Canada Committee has already answered 1,298 letters since the beginning of this year.

For information on contacting the Home Children Canada Committee, see the previous page.



Limited tickets available for:  
**The Ottawa Opeongo  
Colonization Road Bus Trip  
7 October 1998**

Please purchase tickets before 23 September from Frank McMahon at 432-1490 (home) or at 432-7534, ext. 1164 (Heritage Renfrew) or Olga Lewis at 432-6958.

The price is \$10.00 for the bus trip and \$13.00 for a hot lunch (optional) at Spectacle Lake. Bring your own lunch if you prefer.

Dave Lorente will be your tour guide for this scenic trip, which begins from the Opeongo Road's origin near the Ottawa River and continues up to Spectacle Lake, near Barrie's Bay.

### HR Active in Lumber Baron Festival

Heritage Renfrew's float won a prize for the "Most Creative Entry" in the Lumber Baron Festival parade on Saturday, July 18, 1998.

This is the second year in a row that Heritage Renfrew's float won a prize. Last year's plaque was for the "Best Parade Float".

Both floats were designed by Sylvia Hodgins, who chose this year's theme to represent settlers from various countries, such as Britain, Germany, Scotland and France. Costumes (supplied by Stella Laviolette) and artifacts illustrated this theme. Sylvia's husband Jeff had the difficult task of guiding the 1950 farmall-a tractor with its odd cargo during the parade.

Heritage members also contributed by attending events as strolling players and by holding two Open Houses at its facilities in the archives building.

Frank McMahon volunteered to collect the memories of men who worked in the lumber camps for "A Tribute to The Lumberjacks", a special supplement to the July 11 issue of The Renfrew Mercury. He interviewed approximately 160 men about their memories of a shantyman's life. He wrote the generic article, "Life in the lumber camps" and he also prepared the stories and photographs for feature articles on Anthony Lapenskie, Philip Laska and Bornis Woejick.



Heritage Renfrew's float in the 1998 Lumber Baron Festival parade

photo courtesy of The Renfrew News

### Battle Over 1911 Census

Statistics Canada has indicated it intends to withhold, or possibly destroy, the 1911 Census Reports. This threat has outraged other government agencies and the archival community in general. Apparently the department has the legal right to withhold census records, despite the fact that census reports are an important source of information for a wide variety of researchers.

Refusing to make these records public would conflict, for example, with our government's anticipated support of the British intention to provide better access to Home Children records.

The British committee's recommendations include a statement that *"A central database should be established as soon as possible.... The database should be managed and coordinated jointly by the governments*

*involved. We urge those governments to take any steps open to them to waive or amend legislative restrictions on access to records (for instance, arising from Freedom of Information Acts or Privacy Acts)...."* \*

### Ross Township Historical Society Project

Harry Weller of the Ross Township Historical Society has completed a project to create a *computer list of all residents of Ross Township from the 1871 census*. The existing computer file listed *only* the heads of households.

Harry commented that the microfilmed census records available at Heritage Renfrew facilitated this project.

A list of all residents of Ross Township in 1871, and also in 1851, is available for computer downloading at the

Pembroke BBS. The 1871 filename is Rosstwp3.zip. The 1851 filename is Rosstwp4.zip.

You can also contact Harry Weller through the Internet, via e-mail: harry.weller@pembbs.com.

In addition, Harry has given a disk copy of the list to Heritage Renfrew, where it is available for viewing on the computer. \*

### **Block 'J' land dispute settled:**

After several years of dispute, the Victoria Park issue has been settled in court. However, the agreement between The Town of Renfrew and the Renfrew County Board of Education to deed the property known as Block 'J' to the Board gives the observer a sense of déjà vu. The trouble started years ago, when the Town drafted a proposed bylaw to deed the public parkland (given to the "people of Renfrew" nearly 150 years ago) to the Board. Heritage Renfrew has a copy of this document on file.

Court hearings ended about June 28 and the judge's decision was rendered on July 6, 1998. The Minutes of Settlement (Court File No. 96/816) say "The Defendant [*The Town of Renfrew*] shall forthwith convey Block "J" (Public Square), Plan 8, in the Town of Renfrew, in the County of Renfrew to the Plaintiff [*Renfrew County Board of Education*], subject to the terms and conditions hereof."

The principal condition is that the Board will allow the Town to continue to use the public square in the same manner as it has been used previously, so long as this use is not inconsistent with the Board's use of it as a school site.

The settlement also instructs the Board not to erect any permanent structure which requires a building permit on Block "J" without the prior consent of the Town. The Board has to reconvey (sell) to the Town for \$1.00 the public square *if* it sells its adjacent property or *if* it leases or otherwise delivers the property to an entity outside the public sector. \*

In recognition of the efforts of Earl and Marge Lindsay to save Block "J" for the town, Heritage Renfrew will award them a Life Membership at the annual meeting in January.

### **Our Vital Statistics:**

#### Membership:

Membership Committee Chair Joyce Laird reports 184 paid members for 1998. Please check your mailing address for the date of your subscription; if the date is 1998 you have paid until the end of December of this year. There is a membership renewal form on the last page of this newsletter if you have not renewed and wish to do so.

Joyce reports that sales of Heritage Renfrew Pins are doing well.

#### Correspondence:

The HR Home Children Committee has answered 1,330 letters so far this year.

#### Finances:

Treasurer Olga Lewis reports a balance of \$6,161.86 for the end of August 1998. Donations to the Millionaires Hockey Plaque Fund have reached \$1,642.80 so far.

#### Public Service:

Heritage Renfrew has assisted over 1,110 users to the end of August. Our web page has been visited 1,789 times since June 15.

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### **Heritage Pin**



**'Let me live until...'**

Today, dear Lord, I'm 80  
and there's much I haven't done;  
I hope, dear Lord, you'll let me live until I'm 81  
But then, if I haven't finished all I want to do,  
Would you let me stay awhile—until I'm 82?

So many places I want to go, so very much to see  
Do you think that you could manage to make it 83?  
The world is changing very fast;  
there's just so much in store,  
I'd like it very much to live until I'm 84.

And if by then I'm still alive, I'd like to stay till 85—  
More planes will be up in the air so I'd really like to stick  
And see what happens to the world when I am 86  
I know, dear Lord, it's much to ask  
(and it must be nice in heaven)  
But I certainly would like to stay until I'm 87.

I know by then I won't be fast, and sometimes will be late  
But it truly would be pleasant to be around at 88  
I will have seen so many things and had a wonderful time,  
So, I'm sure that I'll be willing to leave at 89—*maybe!*

Mark Corcoran

**A Shantyman's Thoughts**

The smell of the woodfire, the pinch from the cold,  
the shantyman's work day, grew a young man old.

He loved the old fiddle, come Saturday night,  
but, those logs were boomin', long days he did fight.

The cook was a stewin' some turnips with beef,  
we could smell it a mile, the trees were in leaf.

Dark hours of morning, till the end of dusk,  
we shanty's were earning our countrymen's trust.

Missing our women folk, with babies and more;  
it's cold, lonesome, out here, this Shantyman's chore.

Come Saturday night, boys! I might have a shave,  
and dance to the fiddler, or dance on my grave.

Five months of this torture has turned my beard grey;  
homeward I'll be turning, come the first day of May.

The smell of the woodfire, I'll wash and I'll shave;  
I'll hang up my cork boots, and dance on my grave.

Joanne Beattie Kalimeris



The Swinging Bridge, really 'swinging' in this computer altered image

Please check your mailing label on this newsletter for the date of your subscription. If it says 1998, you are paid up for this year. Below is a Membership Renewal form:

**Membership Renewal for 1998  or 1999**

Name of Member(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_


Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ (\$6.00 for individual or couple)  
Please make cheque payable to Heritage Renfrew and send, along with this form, to:  
Membership, Heritage Renfrew, 770 Gibbons Road, P.O. Box 1009, Renfrew, ON K7V 4H4

**Donations to the Renfrew Millionaires Hockey Plaque Fund are welcome. A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued for all donations of \$10.00 or more.**

Enclosed is my cheque or money order in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to the **Renfrew Millionaires Hockey Plaque Fund**.  
Please bring your check to the Treasurer, Olga Lewis, or mail to:

Treasurer, Heritage Renfrew Archives  
770 Gibbons Road  
P.O. Box 1009  
Renfrew, ON K7V 4H4



Heritage Renfrew Contacts:

Kay Lorente (President, Heritage Renfrew): 613/432-2486  
Martin Munhall (Vice President, Heritage Renfrew): 613/432-7534 (Renfrew Archives) or e-mail [mmunhall@renc.igs.net](mailto:mmunhall@renc.igs.net)  
Heritage Renfrew & Renfrew Archives web page: <http://www.renc.igs.net/~renarch> or e-mail [renarch@renc.igs.net](mailto:renarch@renc.igs.net)

*Heritage Renfrew, composed entirely of volunteers, operates the Renfrew Archives, located in the National Archives of Canada facility in Renfrew (former Mitel building). We are concerned with written and film records and with genealogy. Activities include publishing material of local historical interest, providing research assistance to genealogists and historical researchers, sponsoring heritage activities, soliciting and purchasing records, filing and cataloguing these records and assisting home children and their descendants through Home Children Canada. We are also on the internet and have our own web page with the address:*  
<http://www.renc.igs.net/~renarch>