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From Lion to Leaf: The Evacuation of British Children to Canada During the Second World War

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in History

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FROM LION TO LEAF: THE EVACUATION OF BRITISH CHILDREN TO
CANADA DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Claire L. Halstead

Graduate Program in History

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

From Lion to Leaf is a study of the evacuation of British children to Canada in the Second World War. While European refugee children were excluded purposely from Canada, Canadians anxiously called for Britain to send her children as a display of philanthropic, patriotic, imperial, and wartime sentiment. Yet overseas evacuation is often overshadowed, in both the historiography and social memory of the war, by Britain's domestic evacuation. *From Lion to Leaf* contributes to the study of evacuation, the British home front, wartime Canada, Canadian childcare and immigration policy, and the changing British Empire. Reflecting the transnationalism of the movement, this study marries governmental sources, newspapers, and personal collections, from both Britain and Canada. To ensure that the child's perspective of evacuation is revealed, this study utilises extensive collections of evacuees' wartime letters. Correspondence between British families and Canadian foster families provides a unique window into the familial experience of evacuation. The author's creation of an evacuee database underpins the study, providing innovative statistics. This study explores governmental negotiations and childcare plans for evacuation, Canadians' motivations in becoming foster parents, the evacuees' experiences in Canada, and the lasting implication of evacuation on evacuees' later lives. This was not a migration whereby Britain asserted its imperial standing and passed unwanted children onto Canada. Rather Canada imposed a special "War Guest" identity onto evacuees. This status in turn shaped evacuees' experiences within both the public and private spaces. Although separated from family, they gained a cultural education through exposure to Canadian physical, social, and cultural landscapes. Their time spent in Canada became a fundamental part of their childhood, leading some to struggle to reintegrate into British life. Ultimately, Canadian evacuation differed drastically in organisation and facilitation from domestic evacuation. While trauma and abuse form the legacy of domestic evacuation, *From Lion to Leaf* shows that Canada attempted to provide the best care for its "War Guests".

Keywords

Evacuation, Evacuees, War Guests, Second World War, Children, Childhood, Britain, Canada, Empire, Transnational Migration, Parenthood, Motherhood, Fatherhood, Family, Fostering, Foster Family, Siblings, Childcare, Philanthropy, Letters, Database, Separation, World War 1939-1945.

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I am also deeply thankful to have Kyle Hartlen by my side. Over the past seven years, he has been the greatest ally, confidant, and an over-worked and underpaid editor and title-maker. His supreme role has been as the Minister of Morale, a job he took immensely seriously. He has had his own achievements and it has been wonderful to share them with him.

Finally, for sharing their stories with me, I sincerely thank the former evacuees and their families, and Canadians who remember evacuees. I have been constantly humbled and in awe of their resilience. It is they who had to live with the experience and legacy of evacuation. I have tried to capture those struggles and successes in this study. Although there are so many that I will not have the pleasure of meeting, I have been honoured to act as the carrier of their message. *From Lion to Leaf* is for them.

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Introduction

The winter of 2014 saw the release of the much anticipated *The Imitation Game*, a film about English mathematician and cryptanalyst Alan Turing and his attempts to break the German Enigma code during the Second World War.¹ After an opening scene about Turing's post-war life, the film cuts to 1939; at a London train station, a newspaper boy yells about the declaration of war as the newspaper headline reads "800,000 children to be evacuated".² The camera follows Turing on the train platform as he wades through a sea of children with gas masks, small suitcases, and paper labels tied around their necks. The evacuee children were a cinematic device to symbolise the start of the war; this scene was carefully crafted to reflect the public awareness in Britain that at the start of the war, almost a million children were evacuated from urban and industrial centres to the countryside in hopes of protecting them from the expected onslaught of aerial bombings. The cinematic device works because the film's audience can interpret and understand the use of evacuees as a point of historical reference. Yet such depictions of evacuation are not only found in films about the Second World War. Although one had to be quick to catch it, a reference to wartime evacuation also appears in another 2014 film, *Paddington Bear*. As Paddington leaves "deepest, darkest Peru" and ventures to London, his aunt reassures him that he will be greeted with warm hospitality, reminding him that strangers across Britain had welcomed children into their homes during "the war".³ Unlike *The Imitation Game*, this reference is not a cinematic device to introduce the war but instead is used to draw parallels to the image of Paddington sitting alone at a train station with

¹ "Box-Office Milestone: 'The Imitation Game' Crosses \$200 Million Globally," The Hollywood Reporter, March 3, 2015, <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/box-office-milestone-imitation-game-778902>. That *The Imitation Game* earned a global total of \$208 million demonstrates the worldwide fascination with the story of one man who attempted single-handedly to turn the tide of the war.

² *The Imitation Game*, directed by Morten Tyldum (2014; Black Bear Pictures and Bristol Automotive), DVD.

³ *Paddington*, directed by Paul King (2014; StudioCanal and Heyday Films), DVD. *Paddington* is adapted from Michael Bond's series books, the first of which was entitled "A Bear Called Paddington" (1958). "Books", Paddington, March 5, 2015, <https://www.paddington.com/gb/books/>.

his suitcase, a label tied around his neck, and his need for a stranger to offer him a home.⁴ Paddington also quickly learns upon his arrival that the welcoming and hospitable wartime Britain that he was told about may no longer exist.

Despite being directed towards different audiences, *The Intimation Game* and *Paddington Bear* clearly demonstrate the extent to which evacuation has become prevalent in the social memory of Britain during the Second World War. When “evacuee” is searched on websites like Ebay and Amazon, children’s Halloween costumes appear; there is a popular trend for contemporary British school children to re-enact evacuation, always completing their outfits with labels around their necks.⁵ Yet British children were not only evacuated to the countryside and Britons were not the only people to welcome children into their homes for the duration of the war. The social memory tends to omit over 3,000 British children who were evacuated to Canada during the war. Keeping these examples in mind, why are evacuees always depicted as departing on trains; why was Paddington Bear only reminded of British hosts? This is due to the fact that children who were evacuated to the countryside have become the dominant image of British children in the war, to the exclusion of those who were evacuated overseas and children who were not evacuated from their homes.⁶ The offer of Canadian homes to British children during the war is overshadowed and relegated to the periphery of British social memory. Yet the situation in Canada is no better. Canadian war-themed dramas like *Bomb Girls* fail to make any mention of evacuees in Canada.⁷ This is despite the fact that Toronto, the city in which the series is set, became home to the largest

⁴ Paddington Bear as a character was inspired by a bear that Bond bought for his wife from Selfridges. Bond was inspired by the sight of evacuees traveling through Reading during the war. A label tied onto Paddington’s coat reads “Please look after this bear,” resembling those worn by evacuees.

⁵ “Evacuee Experience Teaches Pupils about Second World War”, *Western Telegraph*, April 18, 2015.

“Pupils Step Back in Time to be War Evacuees”, *Barry and District News*, January 26, 2015.

“Schoolchildren March to Remember War Evacuees” *Argus*, January 22, 2015. “‘Evacuation’ Sends Pupils Back in Time”, *Western Gazette*, December 20, 2014.

⁶ The experiences of children on the home front who were not evacuated, either because they remained in or returned to cities like London or because they already lived in “safe zones”, therefore require much more scholarly attention.

⁷ *Bomb Girls* is about a group of women who work at a munitions factory in Toronto. Does the new CBC show *X-Company* about Canadian spy training camp “X” suggest a turn? *Bomb Girls*, created by Michael MacLennan and Adrienne Mitchell, (2012-2013; Global Television Network), Television. *X-Company*, created by Mark Ellis and Stephanie Morgenstern, (2015; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), Television.

number of evacuees in the war.⁸ The omission of British evacuees from the Canadian national consciousness of the war is mirrored in the historiography of the Second World War.

This research contributes to and engages with various fields of study. *From Lion to Leaf* fits within a larger trend of new studies on the experience of British civilians in the Second World War. With the advent of the social history movement in the 1960s, historians such as Angus Calder, Arthur Marwick, and Norman Longmate revolutionised the study of the war by examining the civilian experience on the home front, particularly within the context of an unprecedented scale of aerial bombardment.⁹ The subsequent cultural turn saw a number of books examine, for example, citizenship and national identity.¹⁰ A historiographical debate over the mythologisation of the “blitz spirit” emerged from works such as Clive Ponting’s *1940: Myth and Reality* (1990) and Angus Calder’s *The Myth of the Blitz* (1991). War, gender, national identity, and the extent to which the war really was “a people’s war” is at the heart of works such as Lucy Noakes’ *War and the British* (1997), Sonya Rose’s *Which People’s War* (2003) and, more recently, Amy Helen Bell’s *London Was Ours* (2008).¹¹

⁸ The province of Ontario hosted at least 1,789 private and CORB evacuees, the largest amount of children across the nation. The database shows that Toronto hosted 198 CORB evacuees. A large proportion of private evacuees in the province were hosted in Toronto. The series *Bomb Girls* explores war themes such as munitions work, war savings, espionage, the internment of enemy aliens, and loss but does not attempt to include evacuees as background characters or even as an episode subplot.

⁹ At much the same time, E.P. Thompson’s essay “History from Below” in the *Times Literary Supplement* (April 7, 1966), called for history to include the daily experiences of people. Angus Calder was the first to write civilians into the narrative of the war with his book *The People’s War* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969) while tracing the accuracy of the “Dunkirk spirit”. Arthur Marwick’s *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1974) argued that the war had a considerable impact on the British people leading him to focus further on Britain’s wartime daily life in *The Home Front* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976). Contemporaneously, Norman Longmate felt compelled to “redress the balance” by telling his version of the civilians’ story in *How We Lived Then* (London: Arrow Books, 1971).

¹⁰ For instance, see Roger Chartier *Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 1993) and Mary Evans’ and David Morgan’s *The Battle for Britain* (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹¹ Clive Ponting’s *1940: Myth and Reality* (London: Hamilton, 1990) argued that wartime events had been altered through the construction of a myth of solidarity and stoicism while Angus Calder’s *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991) argued that the stoicism and “blitz spirit” was a falsehood constructed during the post-war period. More recently, Amy Helen Bell’s *London Was Ours* (London: IB Tauris, 2008) examined memoirs and diaries of those who experienced the Blitz, concluding that the “myth, or collective memory of the war” does not exist “separately from the people who created it”. Also see Lucy Noakes’

A social history of Canada during the Second World War only began to emerge decades after studies of the British wartime home front. Early works focused on particular groups such as Canada's Japanese (Patricia Roy's article "A Tale of Two Cities"), Natives (R. Scott Sheffield's *The Red Man's on the Warpath*), and women (Ruth Roach Pierson's *They're Still Women After All*). In 1995, J.L. Granatstein *Victory 1945* recognised a lacuna in the historiography: "there is as yet no good published study of life in wartime Canada or of the struggle of families to survive war and separation intact".¹² Almost a decade later, Jeffrey Keshen responded to the call with *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War* (2004). Keshen's work grappled with larger questions about life in Canada during the war, particularly patriotism, social anxieties about immorality, civilian women, and youth. Magda Fahrni's *Household Politics* (2005) added the study of Montreal families and postwar reconstruction to the historiography. Serge Durflinger took a more focused approach in his book *Fighting From Home* (2006), centering on the French-English town of Verdun, Quebec, and arguing that social and institutional community remained strong in the town during the war and concluding that Verdun "can serve as a microcosm of the wider national experience".¹³ Jennifer Stephen's *Pick One Intelligent Girl* (2007) uncovers women's wartime employment in civilian and military jobs. Graham Broad's *A Small Price to Pay* (2013) on wartime consumer culture made a significant contribution to the historiography, arguing that the war was not a time of deprivation but rather an opportunity to progress the Canadian consumer economy. The recent edited volume *Canada and the Second World War: Essays in Honour of Terry Copp* (2012) contains chapters from leading Canadian historians that produce a fuller view of the war. Such chapters include military topics

War and the British (London: IB Tauris, 1997) and Sonya Rose's *Which People's War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹² J.L. Granatstein and Desmond Morton, *Victory 1945* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1995), 255. Patricia Roy, "A Tale of Two Cities" *BC Studies* 87 (1990): 23-47, R. Scott Sheffield, *The Red Man's on the Warpath* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), Ruth Roach Pierson's *They're Still Women After All* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986).

¹³ Serge Durflinger, *Fighting From Home* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 3. Jeffrey Keshen, *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004), Magda Fahrni, *Household Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

such as the RAF's Bomber Command (Wakelam), but also chapters that further illuminate other aspects of the war such as First Nations participation (Sheffield), censorship (Bourrie), youth (Comacchio), and the social memory of the war (Vance).¹⁴

Collectively, these studies are producing a rounded view of life in Canada during the Second World War. However, there is still room to examine the Canadian home front and Canadian civilians' wartime experiences, in particular the broader experience of being a host society for evacuees and the more individual experience of being foster parents to these children. Evacuees did not enter into some void in Canada, but instead were welcomed into the homes of families from coast to coast. These foster parents had to manage their households and family units with added guests; in exchange, their efforts were cast as a contribution to the war effort. This experience of being a wartime foster parent has been overlooked in the social history of the war. That Canadians became foster parents in all provinces, in small towns and big cities, acts as a common thread in the multifaceted wartime experience of this vast country. Although it was not the intended purpose of such letters, the lengthy correspondence between British biological parents and Canadian foster parents illuminates their respective wartime experiences.¹⁵ Moreover, this research illuminates the civilian wartime experience through the evacuees' experiences and interactions in their daily lives.

This study merges the social histories of Canada and Britain in the Second World War, presenting a unique and simultaneous view of both countries. Overseas evacuation was a transnational movement that connected both countries for the duration of the war. Evacuation was negotiated and maintained at the government level, between the Canadian Dominion and British government, and at the individual level, between British evacuee families and Canadian foster families. Canada sent men, money, and munitions

¹⁴ Jennifer Stephen, *Pick One Intelligent Girl* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), Graham Broad, *A Small Price to Pay* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013), Geoffrey Hayes, Michael Bechthold and Matt Symes, eds. *Canada and the Second World War: Essays in Honour of Terry Copp* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012).

¹⁵ Some foster parents may not have been born in Canada; some were born in Britain and retained close familial and personal connections to Britain. Yet here they are referred to as "Canadian families" to distinguish them from British parents and because they were living in Canada and often by this point, had started families of their own. Their children, who became evacuees' peers, were "Canadian".

to Britain and the war effort, while Britain sent its children westward to Canada for safekeeping. This contributes to the historiography of the British Empire, its legacy and the extent to which it was crumbling during the war, and presents a re-examination of Canada's role as a Dominion. In *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* (2004) Bernard Porter argues that Britons had a fluid relationship with Empire and that most were individually unaffected by it. Wendy Webster's *Englishness and Empire* (2005) states that imperial power relations meant that knowledge flowed from the metropole outwards as the colonies consistently knew more about Britain than Britain knew about the colonies. This suggests that on a social and individual level, the Empire was fragmented, even as Canada took on Dominion status and gained further independence after the First World War with the *Statute of Westminster* in 1931. Evacuation, then, was portrayed and perceived as an opportunity for the Empire. It brought Empire to the national consciousness in both Canada and Britain as the undercurrent of "helping the Old Country" ran deep. Evacuees were cast as little representatives and symbols of Britain; they were told to be on their best behaviour in Canada to represent Britain well. At the same time, the children naturally brought their British values and customs with them. Evacuation would act as an opportunity for Empire blending. The children of the Empire were to come together in harmony and learn about each other, despite the war raging around them. The time the evacuees spent in Canada at that developmental stage also meant that the children took some elements of Canadian life (accent, traditions, and social mores) back with them to Britain. As intended, evacuation provided the children with a "cultural education". Historians have traditionally argued that the war was the beginning of the end of the British Empire, although some historians such as David Reynolds in his book *Britannia Overruled* (2000) have come to argue against declinism. Instead, Reynolds argues that Britain was not declining in the twentieth century as much as previously considered; Pax Britannica coincided with a time of stable world politics when in the postwar period other powers like the United States were rising.¹⁶ This study

¹⁶ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), Wendy Webster's *Englishness and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), David Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled* (Harlow: Longman 2000). Reynolds also uncovers the experience of the "colony" which as argued by Said, has been omitted from the historical narrative and kept on the periphery.

presents a case in which connections were still strong across the Empire. Without such Imperial connections that made people in Canada willing to harbour evacuees, the evacuation would likely have not occurred on the same scale.

This research also contributes to the history of children and childhood. Like gender and class, age has been adopted by historians as an analytical category. The biological stage of being a child is a universally shared experience. James Marten attributes the increasing growth of children's history to the baby boomers' fascination with their own childhoods.¹⁷ As an analytical category, children and childhood can supersede gender, ethnicity, geography, and chronology. Working from the premise that children are *tabulae rasae* means that they can also be examined as the products of society and culture; after all, childhood is a social construct. Steven Mintz has argued that childhood is the "true missing link" in historical analysis because it "connect[s] the personal and the public, the psychological and the sociological, the domestic and the state".¹⁸ The historiography of children, childhood, and youth is chronologically and geographically varied and touches upon themes such as education, child labour, culture, crime, and delinquency.¹⁹ For instance, Kristine Alexander's work on Girl Scouts contributes useful national and Imperial context to the field.²⁰ Evacuees entered Canadian childhood as outsiders; they were ethnically familiar but were different in other ways and therefore had to negotiate a space for themselves within the social networks of their

¹⁷ This trend charts back to Philippe Aries' *Centuries of Childhood* (New York: Knopf, 1962). Also see Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (London: Pearson Longman, 2005). James Marten, Society for the History of Children and Youth, SHCY Newsletter, no. 3, 2004. For more on the history of children in Canada, see André Turmel, "Historiography of Children in Canada" in *Histories of Canadian Children and Youth*, Nancy Janovicek and Joy Parr eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 10-19.

¹⁸ Steven Mintz. "Why the History of Childhood Matters", *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 5, no. 1 (2012): 15-28.

¹⁹ The list is extensive. For example, Jane Humphries' *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Robert McIntosh, *Boys in the Pits* (Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), Nancy Janovicek and Joy Parr eds., *Histories of Canadian Children and Youth* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2003), Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society* (Waterloo: Wilfrid University Press, 2000), and Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

²⁰ Kristine Alexander, "The Girl Guide Movement and Imperial Internationalism in the 1920s and 1930s," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 2, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 37-63. Kristine Alexander, "The Girl Guide Movement, Imperialism and Internationalism in Interwar England, Canada and India" (PhD diss., York University, 2008).

Canadian peers. Works such as Cynthia Comacchio's *The Dominion of Youth* (2006) focus on adolescence; although evacuees were always referred to as "children", many entered their "adolescent years" whilst in Canada. Even if evacuees did not reach adolescence in Canada, how they witnessed the daily lives of Canadian children and adolescents informed their perceptions and expectations of their own experience. This study also engages with the historiography of the family and parenting. This provides an opportunity to view Canadian families temporarily caring for children who were not their own and the familial negotiations and transnational co-parenting that occurred with parents and foster parents often discussing important parenting matters at length.²¹ Evacuees were not orphans, nor were they paupers; they were not being sent to Canada to act as a source of child labour and were only intended to stay for the duration of the war. Although evacuation was a highly organised and closely monitored scheme, the confusion between evacuees and British Home Children is prevalent in literature and the public consciousness. This leaves an impression of the two groups as one and the same; and this has the very serious effect of casting a dark cloud, often inaccurately, over the perceived experiences of evacuees in Canada. This is in response to the growing public belief that British Home Children who came to Canada through organisations like Dr. Barnardo's were mostly abused farm hands. This study clearly illustrates how evacuation differed from such child immigration schemes in the early twentieth century. For instance, Roy Parker in *Uprooted: The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867-1917*, argues that the emigration of thousands of British Home Children was a matter of supply and demand.²² Although evacuation was fundamentally different, it is important to acknowledge this historical legacy. This long view of child migration further proves

²¹ Cynthia Comacchio's *The Dominion of Youth* (Waterloo: Wilfrid University Press, 2006). For instance, Joy Parr ed. *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982).

²² In Canada, 2010 was designated as "Year of the Home Child". A legacy of abuse and maltreatment shadows the Home Child movement. See June Rose, *For the Sake of the Children: Inside Dr Barnardo's* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987), Roy Parker, *Uprooted: The Shipment of Poor Children to Canada, 1867-1917* (Bristol: Policy, 2008) and Joy Parr, *Labouring Children* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1980). The number of British Juvenile Immigrants peaked in 1930 when 4,281 children arrived. Over the next three years, this number halved each year. Child emigration dried up by 1934 when only six children arrived (only 70 children arrived between 1934 and 1938. *Canada Year Book*, 1940, 161.

that in comparison to Home Children, evacuees were seen as Canada's "special guests" during the war.

Although evacuees were removed from Britain to be protected from war, they nonetheless were affected by the conflict. The field of the history of childhood and youth has seen the emergence of numerous studies on the plight of children in conflict such as James Marten's work on children in the American Civil War. Deborah Dwork, in her study of child healthcare in Britain around the turn of the twentieth century, goes so far as to argue that a conflict such as the Boer War actually was "good" for babies and children because it brought their health and survival into the national consciousness.²³ Studies on the ways Canadian children experienced the First World War have also emerged through the works of Susan Fisher, Kristine Alexander, and Amy Shaw.²⁴ Children bore witness to the First World War, but as argued by Tara Zahra in *The Lost Children* (2011), the unprecedented violence against children in the Second World War revealed how deeply war can affect children.²⁵ *From Lion to Leaf* adds the perspective of British and Canadian children in the war. Charles Johnston's chapter "The Children's War" in *Patterns of the Past* (1998) was the first to examine Canadian youth during the Second World War. He argued that Ontario youth contributed to the war effort and was mobilised to participate patriotically. Subsequently, Emilie Montgomery's chapter "The War Was a Very Vivid Part of my Life" (1995) examined the lives of children in British Columbia during the war, although her failure to set individual recollections in historical context made her

²³ See James Marten ed., *Children and War: A Historical Anthology* (New York: New York University Press, 2002) and James Marten, *The Children's Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). Deborah Dwork, *Children with a Star* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

²⁴ See Susan Fisher, *Boys and Girls in No Man's Land: English-Canadian Children and the First World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), Kristine Alexander, "An Honour and a Burden: Canadian Girls and the Great War," in *A Sisterhood of Suffering and Service*, ed. Sarah Glassford and Amy Shaw (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), 173-194. Amy Shaw, "Expanding the Narrative: A First World War with Women, Children, and Grief" *Canadian Historical Review*, 95 no. 3 (2014): 398-406.

²⁵ Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). For more on German children and children in the Holocaust see Lynn Nicholas, *Cruel World* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 2005) and Tara Zahra, "Lost Children: Displacement, Family and Nation in Postwar Europe", *Journal of Modern History*, 81 (2009): 45-86. Robbie Waisman, "Holocaust War Orphans" in *Histories of Canadian Children and Youth*, Nancy Janovicek and Joy Parr eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 247-254.

chapter most useful as a case study.²⁶ Christabelle Sethna's chapter "Wait till your Father Gets Home" illuminates social fears of youth immorality during the war, while the disciplinarian was away fighting. Similarly, Jeffrey Keshen's article "Wartime Jitters over Juveniles" (1997) illustrated the deep social fear that Canadian youth would go astray as a result of the war, while a chapter in his book *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers* investigated wartime juvenile delinquency.²⁷ Comacchio's most recent chapter, "To Hold on High the Torch of Liberty" in *Canada and the Second World War* (2012), is the first to examine everyday life for Canadian youngsters between 1939 and 1945. Using evidence from educational reports, school yearbooks, advertising, and youth organizations, Comacchio provides a full view of wartime life for children and "teenagers".²⁸ This literature is fundamental to understanding the impact that the influx of evacuees had on Canadian children. Evacuees often entered Canadian families that had children of their own; their presence shaped the war experience of Canadian children either as "foster siblings" or as classmates in school.

The influx of evacuees into Canada must also be viewed as a divergence from the rejection of European Jewish refugees by wartime Canada. The Kindertransport of 1938-1939, the mass immigration of Jewish refugee children to Britain, has been the focus of many studies such as Vera Fast's *Children's Exodus* (2011). Fast argues that the worldwide Jewish community watched events unfold with horror and that the British Jewish community acted immediately and efficiently. Consequently, Britain accepted the

²⁶ Charles Johnston, "The Children's War" in *Patterns of the Past: Interpreting Ontario's History*, ed. Roger Hall, William Westfall and Laurel Sefton MacDowell (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1998). Montgomery, Emilie L. "'The War Was a Very Vivid Part of My Life': The Second World War and the lives of British Columbia Children" in *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1995).

²⁷ Christabelle Sethna, "Wait Till Your Father Gets Home: Absent Fathers, Working Mothers and Delinquent Daughters in Ontario during World War II" in *Papers in Post-Confederation Family History*, ed. Lori Chambers and Edgar Montigny (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1998). Jeffrey Keshen, "Wartime Jitters over Juveniles: Canada's Delinquency Scare and Its Consequences" in *Age of Contention: Readings in Canadian Social History, 1900-1945*, ed. Jeffrey Keshen (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1997). Keshen, Jeffrey. *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers: Canada's Second World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004).

²⁸ Cynthia Comacchio, "'To Hold on High the Torch of Liberty': Canadian Youth and the Second World War" in *Canada and the Second World War*, eds. Geoffrey Hayes, Mike Bechthold, and Matt Symes (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012).

most Jewish refugee children whilst responses to the issue were divided in America.²⁹ Historians such as Gerald Dirks, Ninette Kelley, Michael Trebilcock, Irving Abella, and Harold Troper have examined the Canadian response to the plight of Jewish refugee children, arguing that Canada was highly restrictive and ultimately only permitted a very small number of Jewish refugees to enter.³⁰ Canada's rejection is famously illustrated by the *MS St. Louis* in 1939 carrying Jewish refugees looking for refuge who were denied entry by Cuba, the United States, and ultimately Canada.³¹ While it was deemed "unacceptable" to permit European Jewish refugees into Canada (even if they would be welcomed by Canadian Jewish families), Canada threw open its doors for British evacuees. This study examines this tension in the foundation of the evacuee movement. However, closely tracing evacuee children has revealed that there were no fewer than twelve British evacuees in Canada who identified as Jewish. Although this does not change Canada's rejection of European Jewish refugees, it suggests that the evacuees' identity of being "British" was regarded as more important than their religion. It also reveals a pattern: as European Jewish refugee children migrated westward to Britain for safety, British parents felt that their children needed to be sent westward to Canada to escape the war. There was then varying expectations of safety for different groups of children; what was conceptualised as safety for one did not equate to safety for the other.

Above all, *From Lion to Leaf* is about British child evacuees. It engages with studies of evacuees within Britain and the much more limited literature on overseas evacuation. Due to the unprecedented scale of the internal evacuation scheme, sociologists and psychologists were the first to use the movement as a unique case study. As domestic evacuation was "a social experiment of the first magnitude" and because it posed such a challenge for education, the Evacuation Survey Committee of Barnett House examined a

²⁹ Vera Fast, *Children's Exodus: A History of the Kindertransport* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011). Barbara Winton, *If It's Not Impossible* (Leicestershire, UK: Matador, 2014). Jeremy Seabrook, *The Refuge and Fortress* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

³⁰ See Gerald Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University press, 1977), Ninette Kelley and Michael Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is too Many* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1982).

³¹ Irving Abella, and Harold Troper, "The Line Must be Drawn Somewhere" in *A Nation of Immigrants*, Franca Iacovetta, Paula Draper, and Robert Ventresca eds., (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1998).

sample group of evacuees in Oxford for three years, producing its findings as *London Children in War-Time Oxford* (1947). The study found that, above all other factors, children felt the effects of familial separation most strongly and that psychological factors were the main causes of a child's difficulty in adapting.³² Similarly, Susan Isaacs' *Cambridge Education Survey* became critical of the organisation of domestic evacuation, particularly the disregard for emotional precautions and a failure to consult psychology professionals.³³ The war's impact on children provided an opportunity for Anna Freud to study child psychology. She observed children who suffered from a lack of parental care (orphans or children "evacuated") in her Hampstead Nursery. Freud's findings, subsequently compiled and published as *Infants without Families* (1973), provided a seminal study of the psychological effects of war on children.

Historians have produced the greatest volume of literature on evacuation. Although focusing on the long-term impact of the war on British society, Richard Titmuss's *Problems with Social Policy* (1950) was the first analysis of the evacuation scheme. Titmuss argued that war "conditions led to widespread concern with helping the working classes" and that evacuation demonstrated the need for a higher standard of social welfare.³⁴ Titmuss examined evacuation as a symbol of wartime social unity and as a contributor to the post-war development of the welfare state. However, this positive interpretation of evacuation came under criticism in the 1980s. In response to Titmuss, John Macnicol, in his chapter "The Evacuation of Schoolchildren" in *War and Social Change* (1986), argued that some children experienced trauma or culture shock, and that evacuation worked to reinforce rather than deconstruct perceptions of working-class poverty.³⁵ Also in 1986, Travis Crosby refuted Titmuss in *The Impact of Civilian Evacuation in the Second World War*, damning the scheme as evidence of social hostility

³² Geoffrey Camberlege, Barnett House, *London Children in War-Time Oxford: A Survey of Social and Educational Results of Evacuation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 1.

³³ Susan Isaacs, S. Brown, and R. Thouless eds. *Cambridge Education Survey: A Wartime study in social welfare and education* (Methuen: London, 1941).

³⁴ Richard Titmuss, *Problems with Social Policy* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1950). Anne Freud, *Infants without Families* (New York: International Universities Press, 1973).

³⁵ John Macnicol, "The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention", in Harold Smith, ed. *War and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986): 27.

and class tensions, rather than unity.³⁶ However, this approach also came under criticism for casting all evacuee experiences as negative and thereby omitting positive ones; evacuation was painted as a failure, and popular literature came to highlight an image of poverty-stricken evacuees who always recalled being chosen last.

By the mid-1980s, historians were taking a closer look at the evacuee experience. This new wave of literature began with American historian Carlton Jackson's book *Who Will Take Our Children?* (1985). Using a chronological approach, Jackson examined the first and second waves of evacuation in 1939 and 1940, individuals' experiences for the duration, and their journey home. Although Jackson could have contextualised his book further by addressing arguments put forth by Titmuss, he built his work around material that had become newly available at the Public Record Office.³⁷ Ruth Inglis subsequently produced another book on domestic evacuation. In *The Children's War* Inglis examined the two waves of evacuation but also delved more deeply by including adult reactions and children's thoughts on evacuation and estimated some lasting effects of the scheme. In addition, Inglis also utilised interviews from then late-middle-aged evacuees. Inglis's work ultimately led to an exhibition in the Imperial War Museum.

For almost a decade the works of Jackson and Inglis were accepted as definitive until 1998, when historian Martin Parsons began his crusade to revise the interpretation of the evacuee experience. In his book *I'll Take That One* (1998), Parson endeavored to "dispel the myths of evacuation" and argued that the negative experience of the working-class child had been the dominant image of evacuation for too long.³⁸ Parsons' next book, co-authored with Penny Starns, *The Evacuation: the True Story* (1999), extended the theme of his previous book, arguing "there is no such thing as a normal evacuee or normal

³⁶ Travis L. Crosby, *The Impact of Civilian Evacuation in the Second World War* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 57.

³⁷ Carlton Jackson, *Who Will Take Our Children?* (London: Methuen, 1985), 11. The Public Records Office is now the British National Archives.

³⁸ Ruth Inglis, *The Children's War* (London: Collins, 1989). Martin Parsons, *I'll Take That One* (Peterborough: Beckett Karlson, 1998), 14.

evacuee experience”.³⁹ Although Parsons and Starns are academics, this book was written for a wider audience and lacked context. Subsequently, Parsons and Starns’ chapter “Against their Will: The Use and Abuse of British Children during the Second World War” argued that historians have debated class structures and postwar policy but forgotten government motivations and the diverse treatment of children. In doing so, they suggested that although conventional accounts state that the government enacted evacuation to protect children, evacuees were utilised for the war effort and some were abused (physically, emotionally, and sexually).⁴⁰ John Welshman has since weighed in on the debate with an article on evacuees in Scotland and a national study entitled *Churchill’s Children* (2010).⁴¹ The book provides some interesting perspectives from thirteen individuals (including a school teacher), but its simplistic reiteration of personal accounts weakens the study. Additionally, its chronological organisation and ultimate failure to engage in the historiography of evacuation after Titmuss (1958) also limits it. Collectively, all of this calls for studies of evacuation to align critically positive and negative experiences, neglecting neither and recognising that both were prominent.

Other themes in the study of evacuation in Britain, such as education, are beginning to emerge in work by Emma Lautman.⁴² Moreover, psychologists and health scientists in recent years have also taken up the study of evacuation. In 1994, cancer researchers produced a study published in the *British Medical Journal*, concluding that wartime evacuation resulted in “population mixing” which appeared to cause an increase in

³⁹ Martin Parsons and Penny Starns, *The Evacuation* (Peterborough: DSM, 1999), 196. Also see Martin Parsons *Waiting to Go Home* (Peterborough: DSM, 1999).

⁴⁰ Martin Parsons and Penny Starns, “Against their Will”, In *Children and War: A Historical Anthology*, ed. James Marten (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 266 -267. Also see Martin Parsons *Manchester Evacuation: The Exception to the Rule* (Peterborough: DSM, 2004).

⁴¹ John Welshman, *Churchill’s Children* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), John Stewart and John Welshman in “The Evacuation of Children in Wartime Scotland” *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 26 (2006):100-120 also examined Scotland as a reception area other than the British countryside. As children often were evacuated to Scotland “in family” rather than with schools, Stewart and Welshman concluded that reactions to evacuees in Scotland, unlike in England, were based on socio-economic rather than behavioral complaints.

⁴² Also see Sidney Brown, “Schooling in an Emergency 1939-1945: The Unsung Heroes of ‘Operation Pied Piper,’” *Children in War*, 1 no. 6 (2009): 85. Brown examined evacuation through the board of Education and the Ministry of Health, education authorities, education journals, teachers’ unions, and individual schools. Emma Lautman, “‘The First Casualty of War?’: Education and schooling in Britain during WWII” (Unpublished MA diss., University of Nottingham, 2012).

childhood leukemia in rural areas.⁴³ Evacuation has also been used in epidemiological studies; “Wartime Evacuation and the Spread of Infectious Diseases” (2003), published in *Journal of Historical Geography*, asserted that the mass relocation of children led to an increase in infectious disease in reception areas.⁴⁴ As much as domestic evacuation has provided scholars with a unique opportunity for case studies, it has resulted in an uneven view of the experiences of British children in the war. Studies of children who were not evacuated are thin; usually those children are only included in broader studies on education, for example.⁴⁵ Sue Wheatcroft contributed to the underdeveloped field with her article “Children’s Experiences of War: Handicapped Children in England During the Second World War” (2008).⁴⁶ Most recently, Berry Mayall and Virginia Morrow made a significant addition to the historiography of British children in the war with their book *You Can Help Your Country* (2011), examining English children’s work during the war.⁴⁷ These contributions are beginning to fill gaps in our understanding of the daily life of British children in the war, although more work must be done on those children who remained in urban and industrial areas. This thin historiography can be attributed to the fact that the experiences of evacuees have formed the dominant narrative of British children during the war. The experience of domestic evacuees, however, does not speak for all British children.

⁴³ L. J. Kinlen, and S.M. John, “Wartime Evacuation and Mortality from Childhood Leukemia in England and Wales in 1945-9”, *British Medical Journal* 309, vol. 6963 (1994): 1197-1202.

⁴⁴ Matthew Smallman-Raynor, Cathryn Nettleton and Andrew Cliff, “Wartime Evacuation and the Spread of Infectious Diseases”, *Journal of Historical Geography* 29, vol. 3 (2003): 396-421. Also see studies such as Melinda J. Waugh, Ian Robbins, Stephen Davies and Janet Feigenbaum, “The Long-term Impact of War Experiences and Evacuation on People Who Were children during World War Two,” *Aging & Mental Health* 11, vol. 2 (2007): 168-174.

⁴⁵ Roy Lowe, *Education and the Second World War* (London: Falmer Press, 1992) examined the ways in which the war affected British children’s education. Stephen Hussey in his article “The School Air-Raid Shelter” *History of Education Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (2003): 517-539 investigated the ways that children and school teachers coped by not letting the war disrupt education.

⁴⁶ Sue Wheatcroft, “Children’s Experiences of War: Handicapped Children in England During the Second World War” *Twentieth Century British History* 19, no. 4 (2008):480-501. Also see Owen Edwards’ *British Children’s Fiction in the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) that argues that children were consumers of wartime literature.

⁴⁷ Berry Mayall and Virginia Morrow, *You Can Help Your Country: English Children’s Work During the Second World War* (London: University of London, 2011).

This historiographical trend omits children who were evacuated overseas to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States. Although Jackson and Inglis provided a cursory review of overseas evacuation, only a limited number of works have delved into this field. The first book to consider the experience of those children evacuated to the dominions through the Children's Overseas Reception Board (CORB) was Ralph Barker's *Children of the Benares* (1987). However, Barker only told the story of the tragic torpedoing of the ship *SS City of Benares* that was traveling to Canada with evacuees.⁴⁸ Michael Fethney contributed *The Absurd and the Brave* (1990), a comprehensive history of the Children's Overseas Reception Board. Edward Stokes' *Innocents Abroad* (1994) turned its focus towards the experience of CORB evacuees in Australia. In 1988, Geoffrey Bilson's *The Guest Children* became the first, and remains the only, book to focus solely on evacuees in Canada. Although based on historical research, Bilson's book fails to provide a comprehensive and analytical view of evacuation and the experiences of evacuees in Canada. His first chapter, "The Door Opens", is the most illuminating as it discusses the Canadian perspective of the beginning of evacuation. However, his subsequent chapters are not only organised simply chronologically, but consist of few accounts from former evacuees. Although Bilson added the Canadian perspective to the historiography of evacuation, *The Guest Children* (1988) is limited by his reliance on such a small number of accounts and his failure to contextualise the movement. Instead, Bilson's book reads as a popular work rather than an academic study.⁴⁹ Patricia Lin's article "National Identity and Social Mobility" (1996) relied on results from questionnaires she created for former evacuees. In his chapter "The Children's War" in *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers*, Keshen dedicates a few pages to evacuees in Canada while Helen Brown provides an interesting article on one family's

⁴⁸ Ralph Barker, *Children of the Benares* (London: Methuen, 1987). Using accounts from survivors (only 13 out of 90) and government documentation Barker illuminated the horrific experience and ultimately classified the attack as a war crime.

⁴⁹ Michael Fethney, *The Absurd and the Brave* (Sussex: Book Guild, 1990). Fethney's book has been referred to by former CORB evacuees as the "evacuee bible." Edward Stokes, *Innocents Abroad* (St. Leonards, New South Wales: Allen & Unwin, 1994). Geoffrey Bilson, *The Guest Children* (Saskatoon, Fifth House, 1988).

wartime letters.⁵⁰ Observing this lacuna in the historiography, Penny Starns published *Oceans Apart* in 2014, a book of “stories of overseas evacuation in world war 2”. Disappointingly, Starns crafts her ten-page chapter on evacuees in Canada almost entirely from secondary sources, a few CORB files from the National Archives, and the Patricia Lin collection at the Imperial War Museum. Like Bilson, Starns’ emphasis on reproducing “stories” was intended to appeal to a broader audience.⁵¹

This literature has also been mixed with popular works such as B.S. Johnson’s edited collection *The Evacuees* (1968) and Janet Menzies’s *Children of the Doomed Voyage* (2005), which re-examined the sinking of the *City of Benares*. Another trend in popular literature has been books written by former evacuees which focus not only on their own experiences but also aim to include those of other evacuees. Ben Wicks’s books *No Time to Wave Goodbye* (1988) and *The Day they Took the Children* (1989), for instance, presented a collective narrative that emphasises negative experiences (such as how Michael Caine was physically abused). These popular works, however, have focused on domestic evacuation. Jessica Mann’s *Out of Harm’s Way* (2005) is an exception.⁵² Because evacuation was ultimately a personal experience, a number of former evacuees (again, most often domestic evacuees) published memoirs and autobiographies. Priscilla Galloway’s *Too Young to Fight* (2004) and Hilda Hollingsworth’s *They Tied a Label on my Coat* (1991), for example, can be used for context and often provide interesting personal accounts, but cannot speak to broader trends of evacuation. Such memoirs and

⁵⁰ Patricia Y. Lin, “National Identity and Social Mobility” *Twentieth Century British History* 7 (1996): 310-44. Jeffrey Keshen, “The Children’s War” in *Saints, Sinners, and Soldiers* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004). Helen Brown, “Negotiating Space, Time, and Identity: The Hutton-Pellet Letters and a British Child’s Wartime Evacuation to Canada” in *Letters across Borders*. Bruce Elliott, David Gerber, and Suzanne Sinke eds., (London: Palgrave Macmillan): 223-247. See Claire Halstead, “Dangers Behind, Pleasures Ahead” *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 27 (2014):163-180 and Claire Halstead, “Dear Mummy and Daddy: Reading Wartime Letters from British Children Evacuated to Canada During the Second World War” in *Children, Childhood and Youth in the British World*, Shirleene Robinson and Simon Sleight eds., (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

⁵¹ Penny Starns, *Oceans Apart* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014). The study does little to remedy the historiographical and methodological issues as the same “stories” are utilised once again.

⁵² B.S. Johnson, *The Evacuees* (London: Gollancz, 1968). The book is a collection of accounts from former evacuees. Janet Menzies, *Children of the Doomed Voyage* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2005). Ben Wicks, *No Time to Wave Goodbye* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), vii. Ben Wicks, *The Day they Took the Children* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989). Jessica Mann, *Out of Harm’s Way* (London: Headline Publishing, 2005). Jessica Mann was a CORB evacuee in Canada.

autobiographies of evacuees sent to Canada are few, yet the published memoir of Geoffrey Shakespeare, Under-Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and CORB's parliamentary representative, *Let Candles be Brought in* (1949) is a useful example. Domestic evacuation has dominated not only scholarly literature but also popular works and autobiographies.⁵³ This is partly because there were simply fewer children evacuated overseas (and even fewer to Canada) than domestically, but it also points to a gap in the national consciousness.

To rectify this, *From Lion to Leaf* provides an in-depth study of the transatlantic evacuation of over 3,000 British children to Canada in the Second World War. It demonstrates how this movement of unaccompanied children was debated, planned, and facilitated; traces the children's ocean voyage; and examines the evacuees' experiences in Canada while investigating the level of care they received. An analysis of the evacuees' return to Britain and reintegration into life at "home" illustrates the deep and lasting impacts of evacuation. With fears of an onslaught of aerial bombardment at the outbreak of war in 1939, 253 British children were sent by their parents to family and friends in Canada. The first eight months of the war, a period now known as the "phoney war", brought little military action to the British home front so thousands of children evacuated to the British countryside returned home. The safety of Britain's youngest generation came under careful consideration again in the spring of 1940 when France fell. Britain stood alone in the fight against Nazism and it looked as though an invasion of Britain would be next.⁵⁴ This led to a second wave of evacuation that took thousands of British children back to the countryside. Some parents came to question the safety of even the countryside, wanting their children completely removed from the at-risk island. This effectively started an unofficial evacuation of children to Canada. Parents used personal, professional, educational, and even philanthropic connections to organise their children's "private" evacuation to Canada. Under pressure to respond to the ability of "the wealthy" to send their children to safety in Canada, in July 1940 the British government

⁵³ Priscilla Galloway's *Too Young to Fight* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1997), Hilda Hollingsworth, *They Tied a Label on my Coat* (London: Virago Press, 1991) and Geoffrey Shakespeare, *Let Candles be Brought in* (London: MacDonald, 1949).

⁵⁴ See Susan Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

established the Children's Overseas Reception Board which would facilitate a British-Canadian state-sponsored evacuation. Evacuation to Canada was reduced to a trickle by the early winter of 1940, but not before 1,532 CORB children and a minimum of 1,654 privately-sponsored children had safely arrived on Canadian shores.

The aim of this study is to provide a scholarly analysis of this wartime evacuation of children to Canada. It integrates the Canadian context into the narrative by aligning the overseas evacuation with the internal evacuation scheme. This study investigates evacuees' experiences in Canada and the effects of their lengthy separation from their families, peers, and country. It also questions the impact of the influx of these children upon Canadian wartime society and upon their Canadian host families. The lasting impact of overseas evacuation on the children, but also on Britain and Canada, forms a significant part of this research. This is therefore a study of a temporary, transnational migration of unaccompanied children. Within an Imperial context, it acts as an opportunity to examine the level of care Canadians provided for the children of Britain. However, although this was a "child-saving" movement, the evacuation of British children to Canada was a fundamentally racist project. European refugees were excluded from Canadian evacuation plans under the argument that it would be impossible to reach and transport them. Instead, British children were framed as racially fit for saving and evacuation promoted British children as the "better stock". Although racially suitable, some British children were thought to be undesirable for evacuation on social, medical, and intellectual grounds and were rejected by CORB through its rigorous selection process. Even when they reached Canada, while British evacuee children were feted, others such as Japanese Canadian and native children experienced a war full of racial discrimination. By extension, this study frequently refers to "Canadians". The term "Canadian" is used to refer to middle-class Canadians of British heritage. Although some evacuees were placed in French speaking homes, the vast majority were placed in English-speaking homes. Furthermore, working-class Canadians were permitted to care for British children yet the majority of evacuees went to middle-class homes that could afford the financial obligation of caring for an additional child without remuneration. Evacuees therefore mostly found themselves in middle-class English speaking homes

with Canadians who were compelled by their shared British heritage and had the means to help the cause.

Overseas evacuation consumed significant resources of the British wartime government.⁵⁵ CORB in particular was hotly debated at the highest level of government, but money and personnel were also required to organise and closely monitor the children's progress in Canada. Although the evacuees spent the majority of the war in Canada, their parents' decision to evacuate them overseas suggests that British parents were not entirely confident with the government's domestic evacuation plans. The experience of evacuee parents being separated from their children by such a distance and for such a long period of time adds a new perspective to the civilian experience. Many evacuee parents were deeply engaged in the war effort, either in the armed forces (both fathers and mothers), working at munitions factories, or acting as Air Raid Precaution wardens, but still had to maintain parental responsibilities. Parents often had lengthy correspondence with their children's foster parents on matters of varied significance. This study also demonstrates the extent to which British wartime values were exported to Canada by the evacuation. The evacuees' return to Britain after the war is therefore a unique opportunity to witness children's perspectives of how Britain, physically, politically, and socially was changed by war.

From Lion to Leaf focuses on a relatively small group of British children. In this study, the children who were sent to Canada for the duration of the war are referred to as "evacuees". This term is in keeping with contemporary discussions of the children who moved into the British countryside and were widely referred to as evacuees.⁵⁶ In early public discussions in Britain about overseas evacuation, children who were possibly being sent further from home were also referred to as evacuees.⁵⁷ Even when the children

⁵⁵ Early plans came under Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain but overseas evacuation through the Children's Overseas Reception Board came into effect under Winston Churchill's government.

⁵⁶ "Parliament: Welfare of Evacuated Children" *Times*, September 16, 1939. For instance, Labour MP Mr. Parker (Romford) asked the Minister of Health whether any "standard of accommodation had been laid down for evacuees in reception areas".

⁵⁷ "Canadian Government's Action", *Times*, June 1, 1940. When they were not referred to as evacuees in public discussions it was because they could be discussed simply as British "children".

first arrived in Canada they were called evacuees or British children.⁵⁸ This use of the term is also consistent with archival sources such as the Canadian government's Immigration Branch records that refer to the children as evacuees.⁵⁹ However, some historians have chosen to use the term "Guest Children" in their work. This is problematic for a number of reasons. The blind use of "guest children" ignores the fact that the term was imposed upon the children after their arrival in Canada. Historians have failed to question when, and how, this term came to be widely used. Although the children were not always "guest children", they were, without a doubt, evacuees; they were the subjects of evacuation. Their organised movement that functioned with government assistance was always classified as an evacuation. The Oxford dictionary defines the verb "evacuate" as "to remove (someone) from a place of danger to a safer place" and by extension, the noun "evacuee" as "a person evacuated from a place of danger".⁶⁰ These British children were evacuated from "dangerous" Britain to "safe" Canada and therefore were in reality "evacuees".

The children were not referred to as "refugees"; their label as evacuees was used to distinguish them from other individuals migrating at the same time and was ultimately used to preference British children in Canada's efforts.⁶¹ Although more present in popular literature, other terms such as Corbies (to refer to evacuees who came with the Children's Overseas Reception Board) and Sea-vacuees have also been used. Penny Starns in *Oceans Apart* entitles her chapter on evacuees in Canada "Sea-Vacs in Canada" but fails to explain the origin of the term.⁶² The study does not use such terms as they are entirely absent from wartime sources and are more likely the products of the postwar

⁵⁸ Child Evacuees and Refugees See Canada as Safe Haven for those Swept by War, *Globe and Mail*, June 26, 1940.

⁵⁹ Library and Archives Canada, (LAC) RG 26, vol 16, Immigration Branch, Statistical Tabulations, "Immigration Statistics – Evacuees to Canada, 1940-1941". Other terms include British children, unaccompanied British children, and evacuee children.

⁶⁰ Evacuation is therefore defined as "The action of evacuating a person or a place". *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Evacuate", http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/evacuate#evacuate__10.

⁶¹ Chapters one and four discuss the use of the terms "refugees", "evacuee", and "guest children".

⁶² See Penny Starns, "Sea-Vacs in Canada" in *Oceans Apart* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014): 98-107.

period.⁶³ For simplicity and space, this study often uses the acronym CORB to refer to the Children's Overseas Reception Board.

To avoid repetition of the term “evacuee”, the term “children” is often used in its place. In compliance with British government regulations, evacuees were all under the age of fifteen when they departed Britain for Canada.⁶⁴ This means that by today's standards, the eldest evacuees would be considered teenagers, adolescents, or youth, although Cynthia Comacchio in *The Dominion of Youth* notes that the term “teenager” was not widely used before the 1940s.⁶⁵ Biologically, there has always been a life stage between childhood and adulthood, but Comacchio reveals the complexities of studying adolescence or “becoming an adult”, such as how to identify the “points of entry and exit”.⁶⁶ This study is not immune from that problem. Some evacuees, particularly those who arrived as fourteen and fifteen-year-olds, certainly entered into and passed through this life stage. The oldest CORB evacuee to leave Britain was fifteen in 1940, arriving a month or so before his sixteenth birthday. The term adolescence, however, is not employed for a number of reasons. This study's thematic approach means that sections cover the span of the war; some evacuees may have been twelve upon arrival but left at seventeen years old and therefore arguably entered adolescence. The evacuees' experiences on an individual level, for example during their summer holidays, varied over time and by circumstance. It would be impossible to write about these from the individual perspective, let alone for over 3,000 evacuees. Further complicating this is that evacuees had a maximum range in age of twelve years.⁶⁷ When exactly each of the evacuees entered and exited adolescence would be impossible to track and write about in

⁶³ The terms for example, do not appear in the *Times* or the *Globe and Mail* or a variety of other wartime newspapers. Former evacuees sometimes use these terms to refer to themselves. Donald Chandler (CORB 1350) for instance described in his memoir “At the same time two other large groups of “Corbies” embarked”. Canadian Museum of Immigration (CMI), British Evacuee Children Collection, “Donald Stephen Chandler Memoir”.

⁶⁴ The database reveals that there were a few children near to their sixteenth birthday upon departure. Author's Evacuee Database, Ronald Everard, CORB 701 was born October 8, 1924 and arrived roughly in September, 1940, a month before his sixteenth birthday.

⁶⁵ Comacchio, *Dominion of Youth*, 3.

⁶⁶ Comacchio, *Dominion of Youth*, 2.

⁶⁷ Author's Evacuee Database. The youngest was three and the eldest on record was fifteen.

each thematic section. To avoid confusingly switching between evacuee children and adolescents (which would otherwise require an explanation of exactly who is in each group at any given time), the term children is preferred. Furthermore, as Comacchio reminds us, adolescence is a social construction. Although Britain and Canada were not terribly divergent from one another in their social customs, this study demonstrates that there certainly were competing and contentious perspectives of adolescence. This use of the term children is in keeping with other studies. Hugh Cunningham in his important work *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* uses the term children to refer to anyone under the age of fifteen.⁶⁸ Furthermore, using the term “children” is also in keeping with the contemporary sources from Britain and Canada. Evacuees were not distinguished by terms such as adolescence or youth. Even eighteen-year-old evacuees such as Elizabeth Burke were still under the supervision of the Children’s Aid Society until they departed Canada.⁶⁹

The number of evacuees included in this study also deserves a brief explanation. Historians have provided different estimations for the number of evacuees who came to Canada. Penny Starns claims that between 20,000 and 30,000 children were evacuated overseas in the war.⁷⁰ Other historians like Bilson suggest approximately 10,000 children came to Canada. Carlton Jackson in *Who Will Take Our Children?* quoted 6,000 for the number of children in Canada.⁷¹ It is unanimously agreed that 1,532 children came to Canada through the Children’s Overseas Reception Board.⁷² Children who came as private evacuees are more difficult to count. To trace individual evacuees as they were identified through various sources, a database was started. Subsequently, the CORB case files that exist for each CORB evacuee and are held at the British National Archives were

⁶⁸ Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*, 15.

⁶⁹ Author’s Evacuee Database. This refers only to CORB evacuees. Elizabeth Burke came at 13 and left at the age of 18 in 1945.

⁷⁰ Starns, *Oceans Apart*, 15. This includes evacuees who traveled anywhere overseas including America and the Dominions.

⁷¹ Jackson, *Who Will Take our Children?*, 138.

⁷² See Fethney, *The Absurd and the Brave*. Australia received 577, South African 353 and New Zealand, 202.

added to this database.⁷³ This process revealed that the CORB number was a bit more complex. The number of children who eventually ended up under CORB's supervision was 1,532 but the collation of these case files into the database shows that only 1,529 children arrived in Canada as CORB evacuees. The discrepancy is because three children (from two families) originally came as private evacuees but were adopted into the CORB scheme in 1942 at their parents' request. Although a very small number, it demonstrates the fluidity of the numbers. The database further reveals that 555 CORB children set sail for Canada but were torpedoed aboard the *Volendam* and the *City of Benares*.

This still does not confirm the number of private evacuees. The CORB "Statistics" file at The National Archives states that between June and December 1940, 1,532 evacuees went to Canada through CORB while 5,118 private evacuees arrived, for a grand total of 6,650.⁷⁴ The figure for private evacuees however is asterisked with the note "these figures include children evacuated with their mothers", but there is no estimation of how many came without mothers. A file from the Immigrant Branch uncovered at Library and Archives Canada provides different statistics. From the beginning of the war to February 12, 1941, according to the file, 4,419 unassisted and 1,532 assisted evacuees had arrived in Canada.⁷⁵ The number for unassisted children, as indicated by a note, included 2,348 children who accompanied their mothers.⁷⁶ This suggests that 2,071 private evacuees came to Canada *without* their mothers. The Immigration Branch file also contains a list of these private evacuees according to their ship and arrival date. These comprised the private evacuee section of the database. However, this list only includes 1,656 private evacuees. 253 children arrived between the

⁷³ National Archives, (TNA), DO 131/107-110, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "1940, Canada". It is puzzling as to why no one has examined these files in more detail.

⁷⁴ TNA, DO 131/27, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Statistics of Children Leaving the UK between 1940 and 1945".

⁷⁵ LAC, RG 26, vol 16, Immigration Branch, Statistical Tabulations, "Immigration Statistics – Evacuees to Canada, 1940-1941".

⁷⁶ Ibid. Jeffrey Keshen in his chapter "Youth Run Wild" provides a total of 5,954 children in Canada. He notes that 1,532 came with CORB, 2,350 came with mothers, 236 with another relative and 1,836 on their own. He does not identify the latter group as private evacuees. Furthermore, the database includes 1,656 private evacuees that would not include the 253 children who came before June, 1940 because Canadian records did not record their names.

beginning of the war and June 2, 1940 (the first ship to have its unaccompanied children counted) as private evacuees.⁷⁷ Although the variation in the British and Canadian statistics is still unclear, all efforts, including checking passenger lists, have been made to secure the number. This study, then, considers “evacuees” to be unaccompanied children. Although the term is sometimes used to refer to children and even women who came to Canada to escape the war, these children did not face the same familial separation. Comparing British and Canadian records, this study will use 3,500 as an estimate for the number of unaccompanied evacuees in Canada. 1,532 CORB and 1,656 private evacuees, for a total of 3,186 children, are accounted for in the database.⁷⁸

This study also identifies significant methodological problems that plague the existing literature and aims to contribute solutions by uncovering new sources and applying innovative methodology to previously utilised sources. As a result of this interconnectedness and for the sake of clarity, the following section discusses the sources and methodology employed in this study in relation to each historical problem. Much of the literature on evacuees, and this is particularly true of Bilson’s book on evacuees in Canada, utilises a chronological approach. This one-dimensional approach is often devoid of context and exacerbates the way that evacuation is presented as a narrative, simply a story about the evacuees’ experiences.⁷⁹ That only a few evacuees’ stories are utilised is also problematic as it means that the “stories” of only a selected few evacuees can be heard. Although this has the benefit of providing the reader with an intimate view of the evacuees’ lives, the practice is preferential and privileges the experiences of a small group of evacuees over the mass.⁸⁰ This study therefore aims to include a greater number of evacuees and their experiences and asks more analytical questions of what was an

⁷⁷ Before this period, the Canadian government presumably was not counting them separately as “unaccompanied evacuees” because overseas evacuation had not become a realistic proposition or an official scheme. Some children were sent directly to private schools in Canada without financial or arrangement assistance, and therefore do not appear in the lists prior to June, 1940.

⁷⁸ Author’s Evacuee Database.

⁷⁹ This is especially true of literature for a more popular audience. Penny Starns seems to avoid this trap in her chapter on “sea-vacuees” but still does not provide an in-depth analysis that utilises new sources or solves some methodological issues.

⁸⁰ This permits the few to speak for the whole; those with traumatic experiences could be preferenced over those with very happy experiences.

unprecedented transnational temporary migration of unaccompanied children. The sources employed here move this study further away from the traditional superficial view of evacuees in Canada. It does broadly flow chronologically due to the nature of evacuation and investigates the pre-evacuation period, the duration of evacuation, and the post-evacuation periods. To avoid simply narrating their experiences, this study devotes two chapters to the children's time spent in Canada. It exercises a thematic approach by analysing the experiences in terms of their lives in the public and private space. The private space is conceptualised as their personal lives within the home, including personal relationships. Conversely, the public space includes their experiences of spaces and places outside the home such as school and church and where evacuees interacted with broader society.

Throughout, this study aims to discuss CORB and private evacuees in equal measure. Evacuation literature has tended to favour CORB evacuees because of the organised movement and because evacuees were also sent to Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Private evacuees, and not just numerically, are certainly harder to trace. However, this study overcomes that methodological barrier by employing a variety of sources. CORB files enable, particularly through the database, an in-depth quantitative analysis; the numerous evacuee collections held at the Imperial War Museum and the Canadian War Museum provide a qualitative insight. These are aligned, where possible, to provide a rounded view of CORB and private evacuees. That being said, this does not overshadow the fact that CORB and private evacuees could have very different experiences whilst in Canada. Private evacuees are traditionally thought to be wealthier than CORB evacuees; their parents could pay for their ship passage and their hosts took total responsibility for providing for the children. This does not mean that there were not middle- or upper-class children who came through CORB as evacuees.⁸¹ Private evacuees could have had different experiences in terms of their schooling, the luxuries they experienced, and even where they lived in Canada. However, similarities between CORB and private evacuees need to be considered; both were separated from their

⁸¹ See chapter two for more on CORB selection. The CORB scheme omitted "slum children" yet there were some children from "good" working class homes.

families, had to rely on Canadian hospitality, had to become accustomed to Canadian peers, and returned to Britain. Therefore, this study avoids unfounded broad claims and carefully considers the differences and similarities in such experiences.

The database created for this study also seeks to alleviate the imbalance in the representation of CORB and private evacuees. With over fifty-two categories of data, the database has produced innovative statistics that no one in the field of either domestic evacuees or evacuees in Canada has been able to produce. On their own, evacuee stories are individualized; it is only when we combine them that trends and patterns emerge. As the saying goes, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”, and this remedies the unanalytical methodological issues that plague the study of evacuees in Canada. This new digital historical source is utilised throughout this study. CORB and private evacuees are compared, discovering trends in the number of children who were evacuated with siblings, their journeys, dates of arrival, provincial distribution, and even their hosts. A spatial analysis can also be conducted, for example considering how many evacuees lived in each city or the proximity to one another, particularly in small cities and towns. Being the only evacuee “on the block” or being one of several could equally shape the evacuees’ experiences. The groups of private evacuees who traveled together, such as Byron House or Ford Motor Company evacuees, are similarly represented in the database and by extension, this study. The CORB section of the database reveals unprecedented trends in provincial distribution (for children who were assigned to provinces by Canadian authorities), the evacuees’ origins (which challenge the view that all evacuees were from London), schooling, health issues, traumatic events, the number of foster homes, and the frequency of, and reasons for, moves between foster homes. This level of detail of the evacuees’ experiences has never before been produced.⁸²

Although the foundation of the database and this study, CORB files, particularly evacuees’ “case files” have their limitations. These case files were two-sided templated documents filled in by CORB officials in order to record evacuees’ personal information

⁸² The database has also proven it worth in regards to answering genealogical enquiries about evacuees. Evacuees, especially CORB evacuees, can be identified by name, location, school, or host family.

and monitor their progress while in Canada. These case files provide a valuable profile for each CORB child yet they cannot reveal every aspect of evacuees' lives. The first problem is that some files direct readers to other records with notes such as "see docket 23".⁸³ These were usually in instances where a child suffered an injury, loss, or illness, or had behavioural or emotional struggle. For the historian, additional information on these circumstances would be enlightening however such dockets have since been lost or destroyed and therefore can no longer be matched to the child's case file. This leaves sometimes quite limited information on struggles that faced evacuees. Another issue is that details of children's progress included in these case files came from Canadian authorities over the period of the war. Local childcare officials or Reverends were tasked with monitoring evacuees and reporting issues such as the child's move to another foster home. This information was presented to provincial authorities who would then report to the Canadian federal authorities and/or CORB back in Britain. This three-tiered process could potentially enable for the loss of information. Further, this process relied on the ability of local authorities to provide complete and detailed reports. Case files therefore may be missing vital information because of this reliance on local authorities that were often few in numbers and were overstretched and overwhelmed. Childcare authorities at the local level may have additional records pertaining to evacuees however all efforts to uncover such sources have been unsuccessful. A major reason for this is that records either have been destroyed or are still closed due to privacy regulations. As the hundredth year anniversary comes in another twenty-five years, such restrictions may lift and reveal additional records. Furthermore, within CORB case files there is an absence of instances of abuse. Although one should not approach this topic with the biased expectation that abuse of evacuees was widespread, it is worth noting that information on any maltreatment of evacuees may be more extensively revealed in local reports. This may certainly be true for evacuees who required medical attention for "extreme maladjustment" or a "mental breakdown". Although having further information would provide a well-rounded view, these case files provide more details about evacuees than

⁸³ CORB case files can be found at the British National Archives (TNA) in files DO 131/107-110.

any other existing source. Disappointingly, no such records exist for private evacuees in Canada.

Another way to examine the experiences of the children is to look at sources in which they describe their experiences. Evacuee literature has tended to rely on recollections from former evacuees. This is a broader methodological problem in the study of childhood. Such adult-created sources by nature provide a retrospective view or memory of childhood. This provides a limited insight into childhood, as the children themselves are omitted; how the children perceived, in this instance, their childhood evacuation is absent. Therefore, it is important to hear the children's voice and see how the children perceived the war and their evacuation. A difficulty in studying childhood is that children do not tend to leave a great deal of sources. However, the unique circumstances of the evacuation and separation from family led many children to create sources, particularly letters. Literature on evacuees in Canada surprisingly has largely omitted such letters.⁸⁴ To rectify this, this study utilises numerous collections of evacuee letters held at the Imperial War Museum and the Canadian War Museum. Using discourse analysis, these lengthy correspondences illustrate the evacuees' various experiences, particularly over the course of the war; how the evacuees perceived their experiences; and how they chose to reflect their experiences to their families. Such letters clearly demonstrate that children exercised autonomy to create their own narrative of evacuation.

While evacuee letters are central to this study, they too have their limitations. Although evacuees composed the letters themselves, it is possible that foster parents or other adults read the letters before posting them. This may have altered the extent to which evacuees perceived their letter writing as an opportunity to be honest with their parents about their experiences. Evacuees may have also exercised self-censorship to ensure that their letters did not upset their family members. This may explain the unexpected lack of letters that record constant feelings of homesickness. Another issue is

⁸⁴ The exception is Helen Brown's chapter "Negotiating Space, Time and Identity" (2006) and Halstead, "Dear Mummy and Daddy: Reading Wartime Letters from British Children Evacuated to Canada" (2015).

that many evacuees began writing letters during their Atlantic crossing and continued throughout the war. Evacuees ceased letter-writing as they departed Canada. The evacuee narrative ends as the war concludes. This is problematic because the impact of evacuation on the evacuees, their families, and their Canadian host families did not abruptly end in a similar way. To investigate these lasting consequences, sources that uncover the evacuees' return to Britain and their later lives are required. Collections of memoirs and oral interviews held at the Imperial War Museum and the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 are utilised in this study precisely because they provide a view of evacuation with hindsight. Although the interviews are pre-recorded and were not conducted by the author specifically for this study, they provide valuable insight. However, this study recognises that such sources, created over fifty years after evacuation, are not the same as contemporary reflections. These sources provide valuable information that is absent from other sources, such as reflecting the evacuees' post-war lives. These are used sparingly and only when necessary, with the limitations in mind; omitting such sources would ultimately disadvantage this study.⁸⁵ That such collections exist in Canada and Britain illustrates that there is still a legacy of evacuation in both countries. Evacuees have felt compelled to add their voices to the narrative and have chosen which institution to approach; either because they have returned to Pier 21 for a visit from Britain or have permanently immigrated to Canada.

This desire of some former evacuees to add their voice to the narrative is still present, particularly as many evacuees are passing away. As a result of media and newspaper coverage this project has garnered over the past year, people have written the author with memoirs about evacuation. Almost by happenstance, this study created another entirely new source, which has demonstrated its historical value. In total, sixteen former evacuees, seven private and nine CORB, in addition to twenty-nine individuals who have some relation to an evacuee, have been included in this new evacuee collection. This has provided the unique opportunity to align former evacuees' perceptions of

⁸⁵ See Neil Sutherland, "When You Listen to the Winds of Childhood, How Much Can You Believe?" in *Histories of Canadian Children and Youth*, (2003).

evacuation with wartime sources such as CORB case files.⁸⁶ These have filled in the blanks in many cases by illuminating some aspects that might not be clear from the wartime sources. For instance, Mary Hume originally lived with her aunt and uncle in Stratford, Ontario, but subsequently moved to another home. Her case file omits a reason for this move and it is only in hearing Mary's account that the reason is uncovered. These enquiries often supply information that is absent from the existing, conventional archival sources. Many of these accounts are from those who have never shared their recollections. Such letters and e-mails have come in from across Canada and even Britain, clearly reflecting the transnational legacy of evacuation. These enquiries have not only come from former evacuees. There has been correspondence that represents the Canadian families that hosted evacuees, coming from either the children's host families or grandchildren.⁸⁷ Their recollections are highly valuable, as the experiences of Canadian foster families have been almost fully omitted from the literature. Although such correspondence is used with caution much like evacuee interviews, the notes add much needed perspective, illuminating why Canadians hosted evacuees and the impact that evacuation had on Canadian families. How did the Canadian children feel about gaining a "temporary sibling"? Lastly, individuals who grew up in Canada during the war have written to express their memories of evacuees. Like foster parents, Canadian children have been relegated in evacuee literature despite the fact that they became evacuees' peers, classmates, and friends. That these individuals chose to record their recollections demonstrates that evacuees left behind a legacy in the minds of Canadians and particularly in Canadians' memories of their wartime childhood.

This study relies upon a variety of sources that range from personal to public to political to digital. In addition to the sources mentioned above, using British and Canadian parliamentary debates, newspapers, Mass Observation records, British and Canadian government files, letters from Canadian foster parents and British parents, and school records ensures that this study provides an in-depth, original view of evacuees in

⁸⁶ For instance, they may remember two foster homes yet their case file reveals they were actually placed in three.

⁸⁷ It is unlikely that any foster parents are still living.

Canada. The marrying of British and Canadian sources, something that the historiography has omitted, provides a fuller transnational view of evacuation and its impact on evacuees, their families, their foster families, and Canadians.

From Lion to Leaf comprises of five chapters. Chapter one maps the reasons why Canada pledged to help Britain's children and how, after repeated Canadian offers, an overseas evacuation scheme was finally formed. For Canadians, evacuation was not only a humanitarian and philanthropic cause but was a way to help the Old Country. Fostering Britain's children was cast as a contribution to the war effort and a way to be patriotic. Transnational public and governmental debates established the guidelines by which evacuation would function and ultimately excluded non-British children. Overseas evacuation would only work if Canada retained a significant amount of authority over selection and care of the children. Chapter two reveals how plans for evacuation came to fruition in the summer of 1940. British parents' deliberations over evacuation and a rigorous selection process decided *who* was suitable for evacuation. The chapter also examines the vast transportation arrangements made by both Britain and Canada, dependent upon on individuals and groups at all levels of society. The children's ocean journey and rail passage across Canada illustrate attempts to provide the children the highest level of care. For CORB evacuees it also played a practical role in determining the provincial distribution of children and, by extension, their foster homes. It is here that the children began to record their own experiences, as it became their first experience of evacuation.

To frame the evacuees' experiences while in Canada, chapters three and four employ the concept of private and public space. Chapter three examines the private lives of evacuees and their experiences within their foster homes. Canadians finally took up their roles as foster parents, many very seriously as they worked to ensure that the evacuees' physical and emotional health were protected. The database reveals trends in the evacuees' placements and health statistics, and how Canadian authorities dealt with unsuccessful placements. Evacuee letters illustrate how the children themselves perceived their experiences and how they maintained connections to Britain. Correspondence between foster parents and biological parents presents a unique case of same-sex, long-

distance quasi co-parenting. Chapter four considers the evacuees' wartime experiences in the public sphere and argues that as a consequence of all the care provided for evacuees, they gained a special status as little celebrities in Canada. Their imposed identity as "Canada's Guest Children" stayed with them through school and church. Evacuees also experienced a "cultural education" through their participation in Canadian childhood.

Chapter five traces the evacuees' return to Britain. The database reveals that their repatriation was much more staggered than their arrival and was not simply driven by the cessation of hostilities. The plans and preparations for their departure illustrates that Canadian foster parents maintained their responsibility to care for evacuees. The impact of being uprooted from what was, for some, a happy home life remained with many evacuees, particularly as they attempted to reintegrate into British society and their family life. Tracing the post-war experiences of evacuees reveals many who felt so connected to Canada because of their evacuation that they immigrated. Evacuation had a lasting impact on not only evacuees but their foster families and what was a temporary, wartime scheme, turned into a life-long bond between Canadians and their "war guests".

Chapter One

“Send us your Children!”: For the Sake of the Children and the Empire¹

The children at an impressionable age would form associations and friendship which would strengthen the ties of the British commonwealth of nations. Their outlook would be broadened and those that returned would be imbued with new ideas and impressed with wider horizons. Those who remained would contribute to the prosperity and greatness.²

In August 1940 the *Halifax Chronicle* outlined the benefits that evacuating British children to Canada would bring. But how did Britain, as the Imperial mother country, come to look to her Dominion daughter as a safe haven for thousands of her children? How did Britain get to the point that sending her children to the far corners of the earth without their parents to strangers for an unknown duration, despite the costs and dangers of the ocean passage, was the better option? How the British government came to permit such an exodus, and how and why the Canadian government accepted the temporary immigration of these unaccompanied children begins to answer these questions. Similarly, the reason thousands of British parents said goodbye to their young children for an unknown duration and the motives of thousands of Canadians offering homes for evacuees further illuminates these questions. Although the simple answer is the threat of war, the factors that led to the evacuation are much more complex. Historians who have written about the wartime overseas evacuation have oversimplified the organisation and facilitation of this transnational temporary movement of British children.³ At best, they tend to focus on the problems of establishing the Children’s Overseas Reception Board in Britain, but shy away from considering Canada’s role as host country.⁴ Examining

¹ Canada. Debates of the Senate (Hansard), “For the Sake of the Children: A Report of the Special Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access”, December 1998, 36th Parliament, 1st Session.

² “Value of Evacuating Children from England is Stressed”, *Halifax Chronicle*, August 28, 1940.

³ Martin Parsons, Carlton Jackson and Penny Starns for instance have all discussed the “hot-cold” establishment of CORB but have not looked in depth at how Canada responded to this process.

⁴ Fethney in *The Absurd and the Brave* discusses the awkward formation CORB and facilitation of the government overseas evacuation scheme from the British perspective. Such a discussion is absent from Geoffrey Bilson’s *The Guest Children*.

Canada's role reveals the ways in which Canada exercised its own authority in relation to CORB and the establishment of Canadian evacuation guidelines.⁵ It reveals that Canada did not wait passively nor silently for Britain to call on her Imperial daughter. Canadians were motivated not only by humanitarianism and philanthropy but by Imperial connections to the Old Country. The process of turning offers of care for children into the reality of playing host to thousands of evacuees was complex, confusing, and highly contentious in both Britain and Canada. Canada simultaneously exercised its Imperial duty *and* patriotic pride in its efforts to bring evacuees to Canada.

The concept of civilian evacuation was rooted in the early twentieth century. In North Carolina in December 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright succeeded in the world's first powered, controlled, and piloted flight. Newspapers across America marked the achievement with headlines such as "Flying Machine Soars" and "Flying Machine Sustains Itself: Experiment at Kitty Hawk Pronounced a Success".⁶ The Wright brothers' success marked a new age in which man could rise above the earth. Within a few years, aviation was a wonder of fascination and garnered public interest, particularly in Europe. In 1909, the British newspaper the *Daily Mail* goaded brave pilots into testing the limits of their inventions with a competition to cross the English Channel in a "machine heavier than air".⁷ On July 25, Frenchman Louis Blériot successfully landed on the coast at Dover after flying from Calais. The front page of the the *Daily Mirror* on July 27 ran a full-page photograph of large crowds at Victoria Station with the caption: "M. Louis Blériot, the aviator, who wrote a new page of history on Sunday, arrived in London yesterday to receive the £1,000 prize offered by the *Daily Mail* to the first man to cross

⁵ CORB also had to co-operate with the Dominion governments in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. There have been no comprehensive studies on other Dominions that received British evacuees.

⁶ "Flying Machine Soars", *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 19 1903. "Flying Machine Sustains Itself: Experiment at Kitty Hawk Pronounced a Success", *Morning Post*, December 19, 1903.

⁷ The competition captured such interest that crowds formed at Dover to watch for any arrivals. Hubert Latham was the first to attempt the crossing but on both attempts crashed into the Channel. "The Cross-Channel Flight: Scenes at Dover", *Daily Mirror*, July 12 1909. "Mr. Latham lights a Cigarette After Falling into the Channel", *Daily Mirror*, July 21, 1909.

the English Channel in a machine heavier than air”.⁸ The significance of the Channel crossing went beyond fame and fortune; the flight signalled the fact that the distance separating Britain from Europe could be more quickly and easily conquered. Alfred Gollin captures this sentiment in his book *No Longer an Island* (1984). Although the technology was still limited, the idea that Britain could be reached, or worse, attacked, by air was deeply frightening. The nation’s once greatest shield, the Royal Navy, could provide little protection. Gollin opens with a view of negotiations between the British government and the Wright brothers for the potential purchase of their plane. It was clear by 1909 that aviation could be harnessed for strategic and military use.⁹

Futurists proclaimed the risks that aviation would pose to civilians in conflict. In response to this fear, British newspapers ran headlines such as “Prepared for Aerial War: Britain’s Fleet of Airships Being Formed” in January 1913.¹⁰ The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 confirmed futurist perspectives. Both British and German forces came to utilise airplanes for reconnaissance over the Western front and dogfights came to fill the skies with now famous flying-aces such as Canada’s Billy Bishop and Germany’s Manfred von Richthofen, also known as the “Red Baron”.¹¹ It was on Christmas Eve of 1914 that the German air service unleashed its first bombs on British soil, although they caused no significant damage.¹² The Germans then used their long-range dirigibles to bomb East London and cities like Hull.¹³ In September 1916, Patrick Blundstone, a schoolboy who was staying with a family in Hertfordshire, wrote a letter to his father in London describing the sight of a crashed Zeppelin: “we saw flashes and then heard ‘bangs’ + ‘pops’. Suddenly a bright yellow light appeared + died down again”. They all

⁸ M. Louis Blériot made the journey with his monoplane. “London’s Welcome to M. Bleriot: Cheering the Intrepid Aviator as He Leaves Victoria”, *Daily Mirror*, July 27, 1909.

⁹ Alfred Gollin, *No Longer an Island*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984). “Did the government make them an offer for their Aeroplanes? The Wright Brothers Leaving the War office Yesterday”, *Daily Mirror*, May 4, 1909.

¹⁰ “Prepared for Aerial War: Britain’s Fleet of Airships Being Formed”, *Daily Express*, January 21, 1913.

¹¹ Jonathan Vance notes that during the war, the British captured half a million aerial photographs, which would be used to trace the enemy’s position. Jonathan Vance, “Soon shall the sky be ours” in *High Flight* (Toronto: Penguin, 2002), 45. See chapter for more on First World War and battlefield aviation.

¹² *Ibid*, 61.

¹³ *Ibid*, 62. Zeppelins were quite unreliable however.

rushed to the window and Patrick described “there right above us was the Zepp! It had broken in half...it was in flames, roaring, and crackling...It was about 100 yards away from the house and directly opposite us!!!” Although he noted that he would rather not describe the state of the crew, Patrick noted “of course, they were all dead – burnt to death. They were roasted, there is absolutely no other word for it. They were brown, like the outside of Roast beef. One had his legs off at the knees, and you could see the joint!”¹⁴ It is unknown if Patrick was sent to Hertfordshire by his parents in case London was bombed, but regardless the inaccuracy of the Zeppelin put Hertfordshire just as much at risk. Even if potentially in danger, Patrick’s perspective as a child was more focused on the delight and fascination of the sight of the “Zepp” going down.¹⁵

Some parents, possibly like Patrick Blundstone’s, sent their children away from London. John Bowlby, who went on to become a distinguished child psychiatrist, was placed in a boarding school in the country as protection.¹⁶ Such considerations for the safety of Britain’s children began to take on some official status.¹⁷ Stefan Goebel’s chapter on London schools in *Capital Cities at War* (2012) illustrates the anxiety of teachers and parents to protect the children. By 1917, safety precautions were taken by the Board of Education stating that during an air raid warning, children on the top floor of a school had to be moved and distributed throughout lower floors.¹⁸ Teachers had to cope with anxious children who, as described in numerous school reports, suffered from

¹⁴ Imperial War Museum (IWM), Documents 5508, “Patrick Blundstone Private Papers”.

¹⁵ The fascination with such a sight is similar to that which Amy Bell finds in *London Was Ours* during the Blitz.

¹⁶ Jerry White in *Zeppelin Nights* suggests that this experience influenced psychologist John Bowlby to later establish the “Attachment Theory” and write about maternal deprivation. Jerry White, *Zeppelin Nights: London in the First World War* (London: Bodley Head. 2014).

¹⁷ In a similar vein of recognising their plight, in 1915 Britain allowed a number of Belgian refugee children into the country. An article in the *Times* ran with the title “A School Entente: Belgians and British Side by Side” on March 18, 1915 as it reported that “English school children have given to their younger brothers and sisters from Belgium as sincere a welcome as the grown-ups have accorded”.¹⁷ For more on the reception and care provided for these children see: Katherine Storr, “Belgian Children’s Education in Britain in the Great War” *History of Education Researcher* no 72 (2003), Kevin Myers, “The Hidden History of Refugee Schooling in Britain: The Case of the Belgians, 1914-1918”, *History of Education* 30, no. 2 (2001).

¹⁸ Stefan Goebel, “Schools” in *Capital Cities at War Vol.2* Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 224.

nervous tension that resulted in their reduced receptiveness and retentiveness.¹⁹ In the same year, the Germans began using Gotha twin-engine bombers. The first raid was on May 25, 1917 on Folkestone where British troops set sail for France. Ninety-five people were killed and almost 200 were injured. Back in London 160 people perished, of whom fifteen were children, when a bomb hit the Upper North Street School in Poplar.²⁰ By Zeppelins or bombers, such German attacks enraged a British population that was utterly horrified by the German display of ‘barbarianism’. Susan Grayzel in *At Home and Under Fire* (2012) argues that the casualties led to widespread newspaper coverage and inquests which framed the attacks as ‘immoral’ and ‘illegitimate’; the aviators were ‘baby-killers’.²¹ Many of these stories reported the horrific deaths of innocent children such as three-year-old Elsie Lilian Leggett who died from suffocation and burns as the “bomb crashed right through the children’s bed.”²² Jonathan Vance in *High Flight* argues that such outrage even made it into Canadian newspapers with headlines such as “Resume Murder of Tots” and “Nursery a Slaughterhouse after the Zeppelin Raid”.²³

Despite the better accuracy and greater success of the Gotha raids, it is the Zeppelin attacks that have come to be associated with the First World War. Amy Bell in her article “Landscapes of Fear” quotes 557 deaths (and almost twice as many injuries) as the result of Zeppelins in the war and argues that the dirigible proved Britain’s military vulnerability.²⁴ Nonetheless, between 1914 and 1918 the British government recorded 1,239 deaths (366 women and 252 children) and 2,886 injuries (1,016 women and 542 children).²⁵ The aerial bombardment unleashed upon Britain in the Second World War has come to overshadow damage from bombs in the First World War. Londoners during

¹⁹ Stefan Goebel, “Schools” in *Capital Cities at War Vol.2* Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 223.

²⁰ Vance, *High Flight*, 62-63.

²¹ Susan Grayzel, “‘Destroying the Innocent’ The Arrival of the Air Raid, 1914-1916” in *At Home and Under Fire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

²² “Death of a Child”, *Times*, 2 June 1915. Quoted in Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire* (2012).

²³ Vance, *High Flight*, 64.

²⁴ Amy Bell, “Landscapes of Fear: Wartime London, 1939-1945”, *The Journal of British Studies*, 48, no. (2009):157.

²⁵ Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire*, 21. Titmuss notes that air raids caused 1,413 deaths and 4,820. Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, 4.

the First World War had even started sheltering in London's tube stations, particularly during one night in February 1918 when an estimated 750,000 Londoners went underground.²⁶ That Zeppelins silently cruised over the English Channel and bombers dropped bombs unannounced became a source of anxiety and psychological unease. The "landscape of fear" that Amy Bell maps for the Second World War was already in place in the First World War. Overall, damage and deaths were relatively low and such bombings failed to bring decisive success for the Germans. Yet, the Great War, as it was known, illustrated that twentieth-century warfare would increasingly utilise modern technology. The English Channel would no longer protect Britain from her European enemies. Britons feared a war that would be fought in their towns and cities rather than in distant lands. London, the great Imperial city of the nineteenth century, had become a military target of the twentieth century.²⁷

This fear only deepened in the 1920s and 1930s. Using British civilian deaths between 1914-1918, Air Staff estimates concluded that if war came again, an air attack would result in a minimum of 50 casualties for each ton of bombs dropped.²⁸ Even in the post-war period, for those who experienced Zeppelin or Gotha raids, there was a fear that similar attacks could strike again, or worse. For others, the fear of the unknown was no more comforting. In the interwar period, non-combatant civilians recounted their experiences in autobiographies and memoirs, utilising the literary outlets to point towards their role and participation in the war. Grayzel argues that within such works "the previous war's air raids...provided the foundation for anxious visions of what the next war would be like – a massive civilian death wrought from the sky." The cultural groundwork laid by interwar representations of air war, as Grayzel argues, helped both to scare and to prepare the population.²⁹

British government officials by no means dismissed such alarmist futurist thoughts and a mere six years after the end of the Great War, sought ways to protect its

²⁶ Philip Ziegler, *London at War* (New York: Knopf, 1995), 10.

²⁷ Bell, *Landscapes of Fear*, 157.

²⁸ Titmus, *Problems of Social Policy*, 3.

²⁹ Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire*, 120.

civilians in the event of another war. In 1924, the Committee of Imperial Defence Sub-Committee on Air Raids Precautions (ARP) was created and chaired by Sir John Anderson to discuss practical, psychological, and cultural means of defence.³⁰ The Air Raid Precaution Committee predicted that 100 tons of bombs would fall on London in the first twenty-four hours of war and seventy-five tons in the following twenty-four hours.³¹ Furthermore, the committee argued that an attack would likely be focused on London and the enemy would utilise widespread bombing rather than specific targeting to attack British morale.³² The sub-committee published a report on April 17, 1931 estimating that if war was launched against London, within the first six days of aerial bombardment casualties would total 18,750 (with 6,375 of those resulting in deaths), and would cause significant disruptions in transportation and gas, petrol, and electricity supplies.³³ In 1937, the British government sought to prepare the public for war through the enactment of the Air Raid Precautions Act in hopes of avoiding panic if a surprise attack was launched on Britain.³⁴ A group of psychiatrists even reported to the Ministry of Health that the population would be stricken with “varying degrees of neurosis and panic”.³⁵ Thousands of psychological casualties were expected for each day of bombing in London.³⁶ The bombing of the spiritual capital of the Basque people, Guernica, on April 26, 1937 by German and Italian Fascists during the Spanish Civil War fueled this fear and illustrated the horrors of this new aerial warfare. Once again, images of dead children were used as evidence of German barbarity. A famous poster from the Ministerio de Propaganda printed in English for British consumption showed a photograph of a dead

³⁰ Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire*, 123.

³¹ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, 5.

³² T. H. O'Brien, *Civil Defence* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1955): 16-26.

³³ TNA, Cab 46/23, Evacuation sub-committee report, April 17, 1931. For more, see Grayzel, *At Home and Under Fire*, 141.

³⁴ See Grayzel, “Preparing the Public for the Next War”, in *At Home and Under Fire*, 200-223.

³⁵ Geoffrey Field, “Nights Underground in Darkest London: The Blitz, 1940-1941” *Cercles* 17 (2007): 183.

³⁶ As quoted in Amy Bell, “Landscapes of Fear”, 156.

girl and warned “Madrid, if you tolerate this your children will be next”.³⁷ The message was just as clear for Britons.

Amongst this pre-war alarmism was a growing concern for the nation’s youth. Not only had the bombings of the previous war advanced the plight of children but the war also showed the extent to which children were needed for the continuance of the race. Deborah Dwork in *War is Good for Babies* argues that the Second World War (much like the Boer War) illustrated the need for healthy, strong children to continue the future of the race and therefore their health and survival was brought into the national consciousness.³⁸ Hugh Cunningham in *Children and Childhood* argues that between 1500 and 1900, ideas and concepts of childhood were fluid.³⁹ Perspectives on what a child’s life should entail were not only dependent upon time but also on geography, gender, and class. Although “childhood” has always existed as a biological phase of life, it increasingly became shaped by views of labour and contributing to the family income, access to education, and even parental affection.⁴⁰ By the end of the industrial revolution in Britain, according to Jane Humphries, child labour was widespread. For those children, childhood was often defined by their contribution to the family economy. Child labour, however, was in decline by the mid-nineteenth century.⁴¹ “Childhood” as a period in one’s life that should be carefree and protected became an increasingly prominent social construct around the turn of the twentieth century. The *Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of Children Act 1889* established restrictions for the employment of children (considered as fourteen years old for a male and sixteen years old for a female) and laid out the punishment for anyone over the age of sixteen who ill-treated or neglected a

³⁷ Robert Stadling, *Your Children Will be Next* (Cardiff: Univeristy of Wales Press, 2008). The bombing inspired Pablo Picasso to paint his large mural simply entitled “Guernica”.

³⁸ Deborah Dwork, *War is Good for Babies* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1987), 88. For example, the Milk and Dairies Act of 1915 set requirements for “certified milk” and the slaughter of infected cows.

³⁹ See Cunningham, “Introduction” in *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500*, 1-17.

⁴⁰ Childhood was also shaped or defined by religious rites of passage such as Bar Mitzvah/Bat Mitzvah and communion.

⁴¹ Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revoltuion*, 2010.

child.⁴² The act did not, however, pertain to parents: “Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to take away or affect the right of any parent, teacher, or other person having the lawful control or charge of a child to administer punishment to such child”.⁴³ As a product of this trend and the experience of the First World War, *The Children and Young Persons Act* of 1933 was passed with a much longer list of provisions. Protections for children in employment and in relation to criminal and summary proceedings were added to guidelines for the care of children in remand homes or approved schools. Regulations included limiting consumption of tobacco and alcohol, and prohibiting children under sixteen from frequenting brothels.⁴⁴ Failing to provide safety for children at entertainments was also deemed an offence. That most of these regulations fell under the heading “Prevention of Cruelty and Exposure to Moral and Physical Danger” clearly symbolised official re-conceptualization of children as being susceptible and in need of moral and physical protection. Childhood was a stage in life that required protection; children had a right to safety.⁴⁵

It is little surprise, then, that government plans for civilian defence came to include evacuation as a method of protecting children. Evacuation of civilians was increasingly discussed in reports throughout the early 1930s. In May 1938, the London County Council approved the idea of evacuating schoolchildren from the city. However, for unknown reasons the proposal did not come to fruition.⁴⁶ The idea that civilians would panic and flee London, leading to uncontrollable hysteria and crowding, was still prevalent; an organised, controlled evacuation could quell this panicked mass exodus.⁴⁷ The Anderson Report, presented to Parliament on July 26, 1938, became the foundation

⁴² The fine for the misdemeanor would be increased in the case of a child’s death. *Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act 1889*. (Britain)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1889/44/contents/enacted>

⁴³ *Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act 1889*. Section 14. (Britain)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1889/44/contents/enacted>

⁴⁴ *Children and Young Persons Act, 1933* (Britain). <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo5/23-24/12/contents> For instance, one could not give a child under five intoxicating liquor unless under the recommendation of a medical practitioner or in case of illness.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Children’s health, particularly in terms of nutrition, however did not receive the same protection. That change would come more widely with the advent of the postwar Welfare State.

⁴⁶ Inglis, *The Children’s War*, 4.

⁴⁷ Titmus, *Problems of Social Policy*, 23. For more, see chapter III: “Preparations: Evacuation”, 23-44.

of the scheme that would launch upon the outbreak of war. The report noted “to meet the needs of parents who wish to send their children away, but cannot make their own arrangements, special arrangements should be made for schoolchildren”.⁴⁸ On the eve of the Munich crisis, full-time planners were hired to organise evacuation even though the Anderson report was not yet made public.⁴⁹ The crisis proved to be unsettling for the British public; 38,000,000 gas masks were distributed and 1,000,000 feet of trenches were dug.⁵⁰ The physical landscape of London began to change to match the uneasiness of the population.⁵¹ According to Richard Titmuss, this also caused an unusual rise in the sale of groceries and provisions in the London’s West End. As the Munich Agreement was signed on September 29, 1938 the British government publicly announced the Anderson report.⁵² Neville Chamberlain famously waved the Munich Agreement and reassured the British that there would be ‘peace in our time’, but Britain did not relax; Anderson and the Evacuation Sub-committee continued to plan for the worst.⁵³ While Britain still “hummed and hawed” over evacuation, some Canadians fully recognised that something needed to be done to protect Britain’s children. As early as 1938, Canadian women began to advocate for Canada to play a role in helping children in need. In May 1938, at a meeting of the North Shore Council of Women in Vancouver, the President of the National Council of Women, Mrs. George Spenser, met Mrs. Emma Walker who suggested that the National Council consider providing homes for British children in the event of war.⁵⁴ Even as a single offer, it illustrated that Canada would be in a position to help Britain.

Plans for evacuation subsequently fell under the British Ministry of Health, suggesting that the children’s movement was for the sake of their physical, and possibly

⁴⁸ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, 28.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 29.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 31.

⁵¹ Amy Bell argues that the changes to London’s physical landscape symbolised the city’s “military importance as the nerve centre of an Allied war effort”. Amy Bell, “Landscapes of Fear” (2009): 157.

⁵² Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, 31.

⁵³ Jackson, *Who Will Take Our Children?* 1.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Bilson, *The Guest Children*, 2.

emotional, health.⁵⁵ In preparation for evacuation, Britain was divided up into regions that would be evacuation areas, reception areas, and neutral areas which would neither send nor receive evacuees.⁵⁶ London, major cities, and industrial centres were expected to be targets. Although narratives of evacuation now revolve around children being sent from London to the countryside, the 1939 plans for evacuation actually saw counties such as Kent classified as “reception areas”.⁵⁷ (Figure 1) This meant that children were to be sent to places such as Dover, right on the Channel coast, that would ultimately turn into one of the most dangerous places in Britain after London. The government then established categories for priority civilians: Category A were schoolchildren between ages of five and fifteen, category B consisted of children under five, category C for adults who were blind, and category D for expectant mothers.⁵⁸ It was also decided that evacuees would be placed in private billets; after accounting for rooms in reception areas that had been “reserved” by family and friends, there was apparently room for 3,700,000 people in private homes.⁵⁹ The fact that evacuation was voluntary and parents had to decide whether to send their children or not ultimately made arrangements for placements and billeting almost impossible because numbers were completely unknown.⁶⁰ As war loomed throughout the summer months of 1939, children were prepared for evacuation. At school, children experienced practice drills and were even taught to walk in a queue on the street and at the sound of a whistle, would “crocodile walk” or “wave” which was

⁵⁵ Ministry of Health would then work with other departments such as the Board of Education, The London County Council (LCC) and the Ministry of Transport. See Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, 32.

⁵⁶ Macnicol, “The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention”, 6. Geoffrey Field makes a good point that while evacuation plans were being made for those in potentially at risk areas, there was little being done to think about how the war would impact those in “vulnerable” or even “safe” areas. Field, “Nights Underground in Darkest London” (2007), 184.

⁵⁷ Bob Ogley, *Kent at War* (Westerham: Froglets Publications, 1994).

⁵⁸ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, 33. Titmuss noted that Category C also include “cripples”. Carlton Jackson notes that the evacuation of Category C was to occur the second day of evacuation because individuals had to be notified in person as wireless radio could not be used for communication for fear of German eavesdropping. Jackson, *Who Will Take our Children?* (1985), 4. See Sue Wheatcroft, “Children’s Experiences of War: Handicapped Children in England During the Second World War” *Twentieth Century British History* 19, no. 4 (2008):480-501.

⁵⁹ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, 38.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 34.

considered to be the most efficient way of children crossing the road.⁶¹ All the children would turn and in one movement, would cross the road as a line, resuming their orderly queue on the other side. On August 29, 1939, the *Times* recorded “Rehearsals for the Evacuation” which included a photo of children at Daniel Street School in Bethnal Green rehearsing in the playground “how they must march to transport centres for evacuation”.⁶² At home, parents had suitcases packed with necessary clothing, towels, and soap.⁶³ Orders for evacuation could come at a moment’s notice. British evacuation plans failed to seriously consider Canada as an alternative reception area; first Britain needed to try to protect its children on its own.

Although early proposals for evacuating British children to Canada amounted to nothing, Canadians were undeterred. In 1939, Canada pledged once more to provide a safe haven for British children. On July 8, 1939 the *Globe and Mail* ran an article that expressed the thoughts of many Canadians. The article, entitled “Our Duty to British Children” explained that the coming war would demand the protection of civilians: “From the little princesses in the palace to the babies of the slums, whole generations are as vulnerable as the troops in the front lines”. All British children, according to the article, were worthy of being saved. The article therefore proposed a co-ordinated program for evacuating British children to Canada, arguing that “the Canadian government should lose no time in sending a formal offer to London...this it can do confident that it is carrying out the wishes of every citizen”.⁶⁴ The story quickly made it to Britain and was plastered across British newspapers. On July 9, 1939 the *Observer* ran an article “Children in War: Canadian Plan for Evacuation” which recorded Canadian offers. Just what Canada had to offer was illustrated in the article: “in a country free from the fears and horrors of aerial warfare the children could lead normal lives, safe in the

⁶¹ Wycliffe Lummus remembers being taught how to crocodile walk across Nottingham Road in Mansfield. Article A2050813, Contributed on November 16 2003, “BBC WWII People’s War,” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/13/a2050813.shtml> Such news even reached Canada with news such as “British Children Have New ‘Wave’ Method of Crossing Road”, *Globe and Mail*, July 22, 1939.

⁶² “Rehearsals for the Evacuation”, *Times*, August 29, 1939.

⁶³ Jackson, *Who Will Take our Children?* 6.

⁶⁴ “Our Duty to British Children”, *Globe and Mail*, July 8 1939.

knowledge that another generation of English men and women would not suffer as did the last". Inherently safe because of its distance from Europe, Canada would provide British children with uninterrupted childhoods. Although the idea was deemed impractical, the article noted that "the very fact of such an offer having been made spontaneously, brought about by public feeling as an aftermath of the Royal tour [sic], by a great Dominion, would be of tremendous and far-reaching importance in the mother-hood of the great British Empire".⁶⁵

Such sentiment was shared by Britons across the country. The *Bournemouth Daily Herald* pointed out that "the suggestion is a bold one, but big problems require bold remedies" while the *Bolton Evening News* claimed that the offer from Canada was "more than just a bright idea" and that "enthusiasm for haven plan [wa]s mounting among Britons".⁶⁶ The *Southern Daily Herald* thought that the "Canadian proposal ha[d] great advantages in safety and health". The perception of a "healthy" Canada drew on pre-war discourses on the nation as the land of plenty.⁶⁷ Advertisements attracting new immigrants to Canada framed the land, particularly in Western Canada, as the 'New Eldorado' with the nation being cast as 'Fertile Canada' where not only crops would grow but children and industry too.⁶⁸ Canada's suggestion that it should receive British children had been taken up by British newspapers and apparently became "the all-absorbing topic of English week-end conversation" as the news was "emblazoned" in newspapers with eight to ten million circulations.⁶⁹ *Sunday Express* handbills covering London read "Send us your children, Canadian proposal". In response to the news, Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, President of the British Council for Cultural Relations, was quoted as saying, "this great offer coming from Canada...will do a tremendous amount to show the

⁶⁵ "Children in War: Canadian Plan for Evacuation", *Observer*, July 9, 1939.

⁶⁶ "Enthusiasm for Haven Plan is Mounting among Britons", *Bolton Evening News*, July 14, 1939.

⁶⁷ The *Sunday Dispatch*, *People*, and the *Sunday Express* also gave that story good coverage. "British Pres Emblazons Globe and Mail Suggestion of War Haven for Canada", *Globe and Mail*, July 10, 1930.

⁶⁸ "Fertile Canada", Poster, Circa 1900, Library and Archives Canada, Accessed 28 November, 2013.

"Western Canada: The New Eldorado", Poster, Circa 1908-18, Library and Archives Canada, Accessed 28 November, 2013.

⁶⁹ "British Pres Emblazons Globe and Mail Suggestion of War Haven for Canada", *Globe and Mail*, July 10, 1939.

unity of the British Empire”. Pointing towards the still deep personal and cultural relations between the two nations, Lloyd noted “I am sure that public opinion in this country will be as enthusiastic as I am when it realizes the deep feeling behind this proposal”.⁷⁰ British officials were apparently “Impressed by Children’s Haven ‘Gesture’” and a special cable sent to the *Globe and Mail* suggested that “no newspaper editorial in recent years has aroused such keen interest among the public and those in high places”. The cable noted that the offer was described “as a most generous gesture” but that “any grave decision such as sending children overseas as a safety measure would rest on the Government authorities”. To conclude the matter, the cable included a message from Ministry of Health officials stating that the spirit that underpinned the offer was “greatly appreciated” but that transferring British children to Canada in a time of war went far beyond the control of the Ministry of Health, which was currently in charge of evacuation.⁷¹ Britain subtly and politely dismissed Canada’s proposal.

In Canada, in response, an article “Canada Equal to the Task” ran in the *Globe and Mail* on July 13, 1939. The article identified the need for co-operation, particularly between the British and Canadian authorities, and for the support of national, provincial, and municipal organisations in Canada and the public itself. Yet as the title suggested, Canada was capable. The article said that Canadians could sympathise with the reluctance of British parents to be separated from their children, but argued that the scheme would provide peace of mind. Separation through internal evacuation was inevitable and the article argued that “Canadian refuge would give those parents the choice of being separated and tortured by worry for their children’s safety every time a raid warning sounded or being separated, knowing they were safe and being cared for”.⁷² Such articles only fuelled further proposals that would appear almost daily in newspapers

⁷⁰ “British Pres Emblazons Globe and Mail Suggestion of War Haven for Canada”, *Globe and Mail*, July 10, 1939.

⁷¹ “British officials Impressed by Children’s Haven ‘Gesture’”, *Globe and Mail*, July 12, 1939. The article does not divulge who sent the cable. The cable also pointed to the fact that an education campaign by the London County Council to advocate evacuation was underway because the “greatest problem” was persuading mothers to leave their husbands and elder children etc as evidence as to why the scheme would fail.

⁷² “Canada Equal to the Task”, *Globe and Mail*, July 13, 1939.

for the whole month of July 1939. By July 11, Ontario Premier Mitchell Hepburn had endorsed the evacuation suggestion and stated that he would urge cabinet colleagues to back the idea. Rooting the offer in an Imperial paradigm, Hepburn proclaimed that this “preparedness move on the part of the Dominion, while furnishing great mental comfort to the fathers and mothers of the Old Land, would be a small enough step alongside the mammoth strides being taken in the British isles to meet the horror of possible conflict”.⁷³ The next day, the *Globe and Mail* printed letters to the editor about the proposal. Dorothy Chatterton expressed her thought that it was “a splendid idea and should be adopted immediately” and as a “war widow and an ex-service woman” offered her services voluntarily in any capacity to help look after the children. Illustrating the extent to which the cause struck a chord with some Canadians, Elizabeth Waterhouse from Maple Villa, in Markham, Ontario, wrote that in the event of war, she wished to offer her home to British children and the services of her and her daughter in whatever capacity required.⁷⁴ On July 15, the medical staff at the Hospital for Sick Children and the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Toronto offered to supervise the health of the evacuees while Rotarians in Lindsay, Ontario, proclaimed their “unanimous support” for providing shelter to British children.⁷⁵

The outpouring of support continued. The Voluntary Registration of Canadian Women called for Canadian women’s support and noted plans to send out five million questionnaires to Canadians for such purposes. This questionnaire, to estimate how many Canadian homes were willing to accept British children, was prepared a few months later.⁷⁶ If such plans came to fruition, “each member of every club across Canada” would have the opportunity to “act as godfather, and his wife as godmother, to expatriated children”.⁷⁷ Yet it was not only women who were called on, and support was not only justified as caring for children. The July 21 article “Canadian Corps Backs Plan for

⁷³ “Hepburn Endorses Suggestion to Give Haven to Children”, *Globe and Mail*, July 11, 1939.

⁷⁴ “Ontario Homes for British Children”, *Globe and Mail*, July 12, 1939.

⁷⁵ “Health Supervision Promised Children Brought to Canada”, *Globe and Mail*, July 15, 1939. “Lindsay Rotarians Plan to Back Plan to Shelter British Children”, *Globe and Mail*, July 18, 1939.

⁷⁶ “Ask Canadian Women if they can Give Haven to Children of Britain”, *Globe and Mail*, Jul 20, 1939. “Booths Here for Voluntary Enrolment of Women”, *Ottawa Journal*, October 20, 1939.

⁷⁷ “Child Plan Wins New Support”, *Globe and Mail*, July 20, 1939.

Sanctuary in Dominion” explained that the veterans’ organisation would offer facilities to care for British children because “every man who served in the Canadian army carries locked in the chambers of his memory very grateful thoughts of many kindnesses paid to him in private homes in England Scotland and Ireland from 1914-1919”.⁷⁸ The Peterborough County Council in Ontario pledged its endorsement while an article on July 25 went so far as to suggest that Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret be evacuated to Canada; Toronto’s Casa Loma could act as a fitting royal residence.⁷⁹ Even if practicalities of such a transnational movement stood in the way, Canadians from sea to sea enthusiastically reaffirmed and even extended their offers to Britain. Again, the offers came to nothing.

After years of discussions and planning, as German tanks rolled into Poland, the British government launched its evacuation scheme (cleverly named “Operation Pied Piper”) on September 1, 1939. Newspaper headlines such as “Evacuation To-Day” notified Britons that the day had come to say goodbye to their children.⁸⁰ The government implored parents to evacuate their children and keep them in the countryside.⁸¹ On that day, thousands of children were taken to train stations, had a paper label tied around their neck, and waited with their schools to be evacuated. It is this scene of crying children with labels tied on to them, holding gas masks and small suitcases, that has become the dominant image of evacuees. The moment of separation from their parents, often with the warning “not be separated from their siblings”, has stood out in narratives of evacuation.⁸² As they embarked on slow journeys to the countryside, hordes of individual Britons independently fled; the *Times* recorded on September 1, 1939 that 5,000 people had departed from Southampton for America in the previous forty-eight

⁷⁸ “Canadian Corps Backs Plan for Sanctuary in Dominion”, *Globe and Mail*, July 21 1939.

⁷⁹ “A Home for Royal Family”, *Globe and Mail*, July 25, 1939.

⁸⁰ “Evacuation To-Day”, *Times*, September 1, 1939.

⁸¹ “Keep Children in Country, British Mothers urged”, *Globe and Mail*, September 15, 1939.

⁸² See Ben Wicks, *No Time to Wave Goodbye* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988).

hours.⁸³ In total, 1,473,000 people were evacuated through the government scheme whilst over two million people individually arranged private evacuation in the months leading up to the war. Britain declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939.⁸⁴

Although Canada was not yet at war with Germany, Canadians once again took the opportunity to propose a Canadian evacuation scheme. Evacuee literature such as Penny Starns' *Oceans Apart* not only overlooks these early and continuous offers, but further fails to closely consider discussions of evacuation in the Canadian House of Commons. On September 2, 1939 the Dominion Cabinet was petitioned by women to approve a plan to bring British children to Canada. A *Globe and Mail* article noted that the petition would "mark the first time the project ha[d] been laid directly before the Government" and that it would "be accompanied by a guarantee that the children [would] be cared for in Canadian homes".⁸⁵ The Royal Tour in 1939 served to stimulate public fervour for the monarchy and for Canada's connection to Britain.⁸⁶ The possibility of Canadians taking in British children was raised in the Canadian House of Commons when on September 8, the leader of the opposition, Robert Manion, explained that the suggestion "made some time ago... that Canada be a haven for British children" was in his opinion "met with a good deal of favour here in Canada". Manion supported the idea: "not only would every man and woman in Canada gladly agree to such a plan...Canada would rise to the occasion and do her humane and Christian duty, just as any Canadian citizen would gladly give shelter in the midst of a winter to the children of a neighbour whose house was being destroyed by fire".⁸⁷ To make his point, Manion drew on Christian rhetoric arguing "after all, one of the greatest of Christian precepts is this:

⁸³ "Embarkations for American", *Times*, September 1, 1939.

⁸⁴ Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, 101. Germany too had a civilian evacuation plan for its children called Kinderlandverschickung. There were even plans to evacuate dogs. Mass Observation (MO), Topic Collection 5-2-F, Evacuation 1939-1944.

⁸⁵ "Petition Seeks Ottawa Favour for Sanctuary", *Globe and Mail*, September 2, 1939. The article mentions that the undertaking would likely be sponsored by the Voluntary Registration of Canadian Women.

⁸⁶ For context on previous tours, see Phillip Buckner, "Casting Daylight upon Magic: Deconstructing the Royal Tour of 1901 in Canada" *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31, 2 (2003): 158-189.

⁸⁷ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*. Harsard. September 8, 1939, 18th parliament, 5th session, (Mr. Manion).

‘suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven’’. “If the proposal is made feasible, Manion argued, “the government should forthwith accept it and do everything it can to carry it out’’.⁸⁸

In response, Prime Minister Mackenzie King noted that Manion had “spoken about bringing little children here from the old country” and “he has made a plea which naturally would touch the heart of the nation”. King recognised that some of the country’s leading journals had proposed an overseas evacuation, and noted that he had “said very little about it personally before”. The Prime Minister was no longer able to stay silent on the topic. King explained that Sir Thomas Inskip, Lord Chancellor, had said that conditions would arise “which would make it impossible in case of war for Britain to think of sending children overseas”. Reinforcing his point, King clearly stated “I was not giving my words; I am giving those of a Minister of the Crown in Britain”. He argued that the government’s action would be the “result of consultation with Great Britain and other countries that may be associated in this war, and in the light of the knowledge and experience we ourselves possess’’.⁸⁹ King was responding to a previous debate on August 1, 1939 in which he had quoted the British Secretary of State of the Dominions when he said evacuation would be “insuperable’’.⁹⁰ This could have been King’s way of cooling off the proposal or he could have been stating the reality. It is such comments, which Geoffrey Bilson in *The Guest Children* has misconstrued, arguing that King did not support “evacuation to Canada, saying the idea was impracticable’’.⁹¹ King however made it very clear that he was repeating Inskip’s opinion rather than providing his own. However, King was also anxious to make clear that any decision would be made by Canada; the decision was not up to Britain.

In Britain, the outbreak of war did not bring the expected carpet-bombing or gas attacks. It appeared that parents had made the wrong decision as not a single bomb

⁸⁸ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*. Hansard. September 8, 1939, 18th parliament, 5th session, (Mr. Manion).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Fethney, *The Absurd and the Brave*, 26.

⁹¹ Bilson, *The Guest Children*, 5. Bilson however do not provide a footnote for this refenece.

dropped on Britain. Many felt evacuation was doing more harm than good, especially if their child reported a bad billeting experience, and brought their children home. By the end of November 1939, 45 percent of unaccompanied evacuees had returned home. In fear of more returns for Christmas, the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Information launched a propaganda campaign in November and December.⁹² Such posters read “Children are safe in the country...leave them there” and “Mothers Send them out of London Give them a chance of greater safety and health”.⁹³ This period of quiet, which became known as the Phoney War, rolled into 1940. By early 1940, many of those evacuated had drifted back into evacuation zones.⁹⁴ On February 8, 1940 the Minister of Health announced to the British House of Commons that of 60,795 unaccompanied children evacuated from Liverpool, 23,000 had returned home while 4,200 of the 11,175 evacuees from Southampton had returned home.⁹⁵ The stream continued and by the end of February, 1940 only 477,000 of the 1,165,000 people (or 41 percent) from evacuated priority classes remained in reception areas.⁹⁶ Because of the Phoney War, Canada’s evacuation proposal fell to the back burner.

Notwithstanding this development, Canadian enthusiasm to aid British children did not wane; instead it was refocused. For instance, in November 1939 the I.O.D.E. Laurentian Chapter contributed \$500 to purchase blankets and clothing for evacuated British children. The money was sufficient to purchase 150 blankets and 532 other articles which were then sent to England.⁹⁷ The Madeleine de Verchères I.O.D.E. Chapter at its January 1940 meeting collected seventeen sweaters, twenty-five bloomers and skirts, and six blankets for British children.⁹⁸ Such Canadian contributions were duly

⁹² Macnicol, “The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention”, 14.

⁹³ “The Evacuation of Liverpool”, Liverpool Blitz 70! accessed January 23, 2015, <http://www.liverpoolblitz70.co.uk/2011/01/25/the-evacuation-of-liverpool/>

⁹⁴ Macnicol, “The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention”, 7.

⁹⁵ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard, Written Answers. February 8, 1940. 5th series, vol 357.

⁹⁶ Macnicol, “The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention”, 14.

⁹⁷ “Laurentian Chapter”, *Ottawa Journal*, November 7, 1939.

⁹⁸ “Supplies for Soldiers”, *Ottawa Journal*, January 11, 1940.

noted in British newspapers. The article “Canadian Advances: Clothing for Evacuees” in the *Manchester Guardian* noted that Canadian women had sent crates of clothing to be distributed in reception areas, most with handwritten labels “which brings an individual donor close”. “So much thoughtfulness both for the children who will wear the garments and for those who will look after them is evident in the selection of styles, sizes, and types of clothing”, the article recorded.⁹⁹ The article also noted that the styles and revolutionary features of Canadian undergarments surprised the English women unpacking the boxes. Canadian underwear used elastic rather than buttons, making it “possible for a child to get quickly into or out of”. It also had the added benefit that foster parents would not have to fix any loose buttons. Schools, youth groups, and women’s groups across Canada collected funds or items to send to Britain. In addition to raising money to purchase an ambulance that drove around Britain with the school’s name emblazoned on the side, girls at Toronto’s Havergal College surprised their school principal with 500 new articles of baby clothing, one from each of the school’s students and staff, for her to send to England on behalf of the school.¹⁰⁰ When they were not the centre of fundraising efforts, British children were kept in Canadians’ minds during the Phoney War with public displays such as an exhibition of paintings by British school children. In November 1939, visitors to the National Gallery of Canada “saw life in London as it appears to youthful eyes”.¹⁰¹ In the following fortnight, cities across Canada displayed the exhibition of 140 coloured drawings by London children aged five to fifteen.

Despite the obvious interest, Canada was no closer to the organisation of an overseas evacuation scheme. By 1940 the Bank of Canada in Ottawa had become the safe

⁹⁹ “Canadian Advances: Clothing for Evacuees”, *Manchester Guardian*, January 18, 1940.

¹⁰⁰ Havergal College Dr. Catherine Steele 1928 Archive (HCA), “The School's War Work”, *The Chronicle* 1940.

¹⁰¹ “Exhibit Paintings British Chidlren”, *Ottawa Journal*, November 21, 1939.

house for large amounts of gold belonging to the Bank of England.¹⁰² Although entrusted with its gold, would Canada ever become protector of Britain's children? In April 1940, German forces invaded Denmark and Norway and later, France and the Low Countries, signaling a grave turn of events and in effect ending the Phoney War. Only the English Channel separated Britain from the Nazis. On the same day, Winston Churchill replaced Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister. To escape the Nazis, Allied forces from Dunkirk were evacuated in Operation Dynamo between May 27 and June 4; the King requested all of the Empire to respect a national day of prayer.¹⁰³ In response to a call from the British government, hundreds of ships, from destroyers to small fishing vessels and lifeboats, sailed by civilians, set out to retrieve as many soldiers as possible.¹⁰⁴ After six weeks of fighting, France surrendered on June 22, 1940. Britain now stood alone against the Axis.¹⁰⁵ Churchill famously noted "the battle of France is over. I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin".¹⁰⁶ An invasion of Britain appeared imminent. Throughout May and June, thousands of British children who had returned home during the Phoney War or the 'bore war' once again set off for the countryside. Ruth Inglis refers to this as Britain's second wave of evacuation. Coastal defences were increased and once safe reception areas like Dover, Kent, became evacuation zones.¹⁰⁷ In May, the government announced that at least fourteen towns along the English southeast coast were re-designated as "evacuation areas".¹⁰⁸

As the invasion of France broke and the evacuation of Dunkirk began, Canadians again pledged to help British children. News of Britain's precarious situation circulated in Canadian newspapers with a particular interest in the re-evacuation of Britain's

¹⁰² Between 1938 and 1945, foreign central banks sent 2,586 tons of gold in Ottawa for safekeeping. "Final Report on Wartime Gold Transactions Released", Bank of Canada, accessed April 24, 2015. <http://www.bankofcanada.ca/1997/11/final-report-wartime-gold-transactions-released/>

¹⁰³ "'Give Our Cause to God' Empire told in Prayer", *Globe and Mail*, May 27, 1940.

¹⁰⁴ Alan Howland appeals for help for men with experience with motorboats and coastal navigation in radio broadcast. "Appeal for Boating Skills" BBC Archive, WWII: Dunkirk Evacuation, accessed March 1, 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/dunkirk/>

¹⁰⁵ For more see Sonja Rose, *Which People's War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹⁰⁶ Winston Churchill Speech, "Their finest hour" House of Commons, June 18, 1940. "Their finest hour", The Churchill Centre, accessed March 10, 2015. www.Churchill.org.

¹⁰⁷ Ogley, *Kent at War*.

¹⁰⁸ "Other Defence Moves", *Ottawa Journal*, May 27, 1940.

children. The *Winnipeg Tribune* noted that “the people of the United Kingdom, who once wondered if the fury of German arms would strike at the British Isles, long considered to be impregnable to invasion, today speculated when the blow would fall”.¹⁰⁹ In Montreal on May 29, the Canadian Legion almost unanimously passed a resolution to begin the movement of British children to Canada, and British newspapers reported that Canada had sent offers to care for British children.¹¹⁰ Such offers had come from the people of Canada rather than from the government. To satisfy such calls from the public, several days later, the Canadian government announced that it would hold a conference to discuss the administrative problems of the proposal for which the newspaper reported “there is much support throughout Canada.”¹¹¹ That simple line summed up the three previous periods since 1938 when Canadians had publicly called for Britain to evacuate its children overseas. On May 31, 1940 “the first spontaneous offers of hospitality for British children were received through the Canadian government”. Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States subsequently followed suit; Canada had led the way.¹¹² On June 1, 1940 the *Times* reported that a limited scheme to send children to the Dominions was being considered. The article made it clear that if an overseas evacuation scheme was established, participation would be voluntary, much like domestic evacuation. Still, “with heavy bombing a likely prospect here before long, it would seem desirable in every way that full advantage should be taken of the generous offers of hospitality to children from these islands which have been made by responsible men in Canada”.¹¹³ In the Canadian House of Commons, however, there was an anxiety that the public offers by Canadians had not been forwarded to the British. On June 3, Herbert Bruce asked whether the “Canadian government sent a message to the British government offering to take refugees and evacuees into Canada?”¹¹⁴ In his response, Mr.

¹⁰⁹ “Civilians Leave British ‘Front’”, *Winnipeg Tribune*, May 30, 1940.

¹¹⁰ “Legion Urges Canada House War Children”, *Globe and Mail*, May 30, 1940. The resolution passed, only after two amendments however: that only children of British and French descent be permitted and that “British children alone” be allowed to enter. Fethney, *The Absurd and the Brave*, 31.

¹¹¹ “Canadian Government’s Action”, *Times*, June 1, 1940.

¹¹² The CORB history report makes this fact clear. TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

¹¹³ “Sending Children to Dominions: Limited Scheme being Considered”, *Times*, June 1, 1940.

¹¹⁴ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, Hansard. June 3, 1940. 6th sess, vol 1.

Crerar reassured Bruce that there had been communication with the High Commissioner's office. To goad the Canadian government even more, the *Globe and Mail* published a bold letter by Judith Robinson under the title "Ottawa Talks as Refugee Children Die". Robinson noted that Ottawa had publicised that a conference would be held but scathingly wrote:

The old Ottawa technique. A committee will meet and discuss and adjourn. Dead children lie in heaps by Belgian roadsides. But the committee will meet and discuss the division of costs of sheltering children not yet killed...doubtless avenues will be explored. Avenues to more discussion of more ways of putting off the duty of bringing little children out of range of German bombs...if children die in Nazi raids on England while Ottawa is still passing the buck, the responsibility for their death will be the responsibility of the Government of Canada.¹¹⁵

It was the government's responsibility to form a viable scheme and it was the nation's duty to help the mother country. The invasion of France made the danger that faced British children undeniable. What now stood in the way were administrative problems, finding available shipping accommodation, and having the British government agree to the proposal.¹¹⁶

In the first official move towards drafting an evacuation proposal, the Canadian government convened the promised conference. On June 3 and 4, 1940, a conference on the "Possible Movement of Child Refugees and Evacuees to Canada" was held in Ottawa by Dominion Immigration and Provincial Child Caring Authorities.¹¹⁷ To ensure that all levels of authority were included, provincial, governmental, and social representatives, especially those with experience in childcare and migration, were selected to attend. The Minister of Mines and Resources for Canada, Thomas. Crerar, and the Director and Commissioner of Immigration, Frederick Blair, met with representatives of the nine provinces, the Canadian National Committee for Refugees and Victims of Political Persecution, and Charlotte Whitton on behalf of the Canadian Welfare Council which

¹¹⁵ "Ottawa Talks as Refugee Children Die", *Globe and Mail*, June 1, 1940.

¹¹⁶ "Sending Children to Dominions", *Times*, June 1, 1940. The article reported on the proposal and the lack of necessary shipping.

¹¹⁷ LAC, MG20-E256, "Charlotte Whitton Fonds".

would also represent the local services and voluntary agencies involved in the plans.¹¹⁸

B. W. Heise, superintendent of the Children's Aid branch of the Department of Public Welfare of Ontario, acted as chairman.

The conference report opened with an "outline of the problem" which referred to the possibility of Canada receiving refugees, particularly children, from "invaded countries, specifically Norway, the Low Countries, France and possibly the United Kingdom". This initially was a departure from proposals that focused on providing safe haven to British children, although Quebec had previously called for the acceptance of French refugee children. Despite any efforts by the Canadian government, the report clearly noted, "none of these children could be moved without the consent and active initiative of the British government". Not only did Britain still need to sanction the plans, but the report made it very clear that "the United Kingdom Government had neither decided upon nor requested the movement of British children to the Dominion". This committee was careful not to suggest that Britain was no longer able to provide safety for its civilians. If evacuation went ahead, it was decided that there should be a general overseeing body, with a strong supervisory board and delegates from various "appropriate elements in the national life". The board representing interests across Canada would be responsible for general supervision and stimulation of public interest, collecting and distributing funds and finding offers of homes and services. In terms of board membership, the report outlined that the individuals should "be known within their areas and command public confidence across Canada" but also should be people whose interests or associations had given them suitable expertise and knowledge of the problems and difficulties involved.¹¹⁹ Even at this early stage, it was clear that despite the board being a national organisation, for the scheme to function, there would have to be significant participation by public authorities, strong co-operation with the provinces, and

¹¹⁸ LAC, MG20-E256, "Charlotte Whitton Fonds". Charlotte Whitton was the Director of the Canadian Welfare Council (later Mayor of Ottawa), leading social worker, and was suspected to be anti-Semitic. Allegedly, F. C. Blair, was also Anti-Semitic. Having both Whitton and Blair on the committee may have influenced the report's recommendations for the admittance of Jewish children. See Dirks, *Canada's Refugee Policy*, (1977).

¹¹⁹ LAC, MG20-E256, "Charlotte Whitton Fonds".

the best “collaboration between government responsibility and citizen interest”. Another task of the committee was to respond to a cable from British authorities that included a list of questions regarding the number and age of children Canada would accept, reception and accommodation arrangements, maintenance, transportation, medical care, and education for the children.¹²⁰ It was from these responses that the conference representatives created Canada’s first official proposal outlining how overseas evacuation was *supposed* to function.

According to the report, children would be selected for evacuation by civil authorities after a medical examination. The children would be transported to Canada but a “study of provisions for ocean transport, for reception at the port centres, for accompanying on the trains to distribution centres within each province” would be crucial. Canada’s extensive public service facilities, perhaps due to its experience as an immigrant nation, could be “rapidly and efficiently adjusted to these needs”. The children’s health would be maintained by the Immigration Division of the Dominion Department of Pensions and National Health with an established health service which would span from the point of selection in England to the point of destination in Canada. If the scheme did go ahead and Britain was prepared to send her children, one of the most significant challenges to Canada was how to organise their reception, placement, and supervision. As a remedy, it was proposed that children would be transported to a provincial distribution centre upon arrival, and from that point, existing provincial, local, and voluntary services would be utilised to place and supervise their care. Foreshadowing the length of the war, the conference committee was thinking long-term when it presented the need for “continuing care, over a period of years”. To ensure that the scheme would not become unpopular with citizens, the report noted that “every endeavour should be made to keep pay care to a minimum, and to develop voluntary co-operation and homes”.¹²¹ Even long-term considerations over providing adequate provisions for the

¹²⁰ LAC, MG20-E256, “Charlotte Whitton Fonds”. See chapter two for more on selection

¹²¹ Ibid. The rhetoric that health care would extend “from point of selection in England” disregards the possibility of children coming from Scotland and Wales as well.

children, not only during the war but possibly even after in a “period of adjustment thereafter”, were established.

To ensure that the children would be well cared for and monitored, the committee required that information on each child be collected in triplicate to provide records for Dominion, provincial, and local authorities. The Dominion file would record the province in which the child was placed, while the provincial record would note the local authorities in charge of the child and monitor the child’s location at all times. Evacuees would not be released into Canada and be left to the devices of their foster family; rather, they were to be closely tracked. The provincial record would also include information gathered from all visits made to the foster home and any other data that would “enable the province to satisfy itself that the child was being adequately supervised”. In addition to this information, the local record would monitor the general condition and progress of the children, including a medical report. To account for each child during transportation, the committee reported that children should be given a metal identification disk with their name and record number. The identification would be used to create a master list for transport overseas. Such recommendations illustrate the level of organisation and care that Canada was prepared to provide for the children, and the recognition that they would need to be carefully monitored. It simply would not be acceptable for any child to be misplaced or left behind during the lengthy voyage. To maintain this three-tiered system, each provincial government would be required to designate “a responsible official or department” to communicate all matters dealing with the children.¹²² Although the children would be monitored, the committee reported that one of the most challenging problems of the scheme would be arranging the transfer of authority over the child from the parent or guardian to the agency charged with the child’s care. Necessary powers to provide “protection, health, well-being, and training” would be required. This, according to the report, would be complicated by the war because of the parents’/guardians’ remoteness and the risk of death of the parents/guardians after the child was

¹²² LAC, MG20-E256, “Charlotte Whitton Fonds”.

transferred.¹²³ Although they were only preliminary guidelines for a Canadian evacuation scheme, the report illustrates the importance placed on ensuring that the children be monitored and well cared for. This, however, was the ideal process of how evacuation was supposed to work. The extent to which this became reality is discussed in chapter two.

The report also included each province's "preferences" in the types of children they would host. The preferences, however, were prefaced with a statement explaining that ultimately, the responsibility of sheltering the children would be a patriotic contribution to the war effort and Canada would accept the children whom the overseas government thought "would be most effective in the prosecution of the war". At the time of the report, there was still a slight possibility that European refugee children would be included in the scheme, causing some of the provinces to state their preference clearly. British Columbia began by explaining that the provincial population distribution was 88 percent Protestant, 10 percent Catholic and 2 percent Jewish; therefore the province would be "helpless" in receiving other groups. With this, British Columbia clearly stated its desire: "should the movement of the latter seem imperative, then numbers of Scandinavian and Dutch children might be taken, but the placement possibilities of British Columbia are primarily for British children". Although there was no explanation, the province also noted that age groups under twelve would "offer more successful placement than of higher ages". Alberta observed that although the percentage distribution of Roman Catholics was higher than in British Columbia, "the comparatively recent migration in this volume and the large number of Roman Catholic children in institutional paid care, restrict the placement possibilities of Alberta rather largely to Protestant homes, of British extraction".¹²⁴ Unlike British Columbia, Alberta did not find age and gender an important factor. Due to Saskatchewan's comparatively recent arrival of non-Anglo-Saxon groups, the province noted that placement possibilities would be better among Protestant, rather than Roman Catholic, homes. As a mainly agricultural

¹²³ LAC, MG20-E256, "Charlotte Whitton Fonds".

¹²⁴ Ibid.

province, however, Saskatchewan also noted that children over the age of twelve would be preferred, particularly older groups who could be used in farm work.¹²⁵

Provincial representatives from Manitoba noted that due to recent immigration, the province's population was 50 percent non-Anglo-Saxon and therefore it would be preferable to "avoid migration that would disturb the present racial distribution". As such, the province even included percentage breakdowns; if French, Dutch, Norwegian, and Belgian children were also accepted, then Manitoba desired 80 percent to be British children. In terms of age, the province preferred children aged four or five for permanent placement or ten or twelve for temporary placement. Rather than explaining the provincial distribution of Ontario, it was noted that the province's childcare system was highly decentralised through fifty-three Children's Aid Societies and that "obviously placement possibilities would be predominantly open for British and English-speaking groups with a proportion of French placements possible in different areas in the province". Just as Ontario was prepared to accept mostly English-speaking children, Quebec, with 85 percent of its population being French Roman Catholic, was "open to any of the French-speaking groups". Placement possibilities in Montreal and the Eastern Townships would be English, Scottish, and Irish. The province noted that it would take "a limited number of Jewish children". Montreal agencies alone had stated that they could accommodate 65 percent Roman Catholics, 25 percent Protestants, and 10 percent Jewish children". The National Jewish Refugee Committee and Jewish agencies, Quebec authorities stated, would make arrangements through resources in Montreal for as many Jewish children as it was deemed possible to bring to Canada.¹²⁶

Due to its economic situation and population, New Brunswick was willing to accept 75 percent Protestant, largely of British stock, and 25 percent Roman Catholic. In Nova Scotia, with a population of 60 percent Protestant and 40 percent Roman Catholic, the majority of homes available were Protestant. Nova Scotia was the only province to include the note that "it could be confidently assumed that any appeal would meet with a

¹²⁵ LAC, MG20-E256, "Charlotte Whitton Fonds".

¹²⁶ Ibid. This would only happen however, if Canadian immigration authorities would permit them to enter.

splendid response”. Prince Edward Island subtly noted that “the nature of the Island economy would make the consideration of the movement on other than patriotic grounds rather difficult”. Due to the provincial composition, the province would be able to accept mostly British and Anglo-Saxon children and in addition, being mostly agricultural, would prefer “older children who would fit into the farm life” although this did not necessarily mean the children would be used as farm labour.¹²⁷

From coast to coast, the provinces of Canada had made it very clear that they preferred British children. By using provincial ethnic and religious distributions as a protective screen, the provinces were able to claim that they would be best able to find homes for Protestant, British children. Jewish children were not warmly included in offers. Instead, it was thought that private arrangements for European Jewish children would be made within the Jewish community. This proved to be a nearly impossible feat. As it turned out, grave misfortune fell upon the refugee children in Norway, the Low Countries, and France. Since the Canadian conference convened, continuous cables were sent between the High Commissioner for Canada in London and British authorities explaining that there simply were not thousands of refugee children who could be easily accessed or relocated. British authorities explained that there were only 150 Dutch children and 2,900 Belgian child refugees in the United Kingdom and that French children had not arrived in Britain. The real problem, they explained, was in France, where there were between four to five million refugees; “even if Canada were ready to receive them”, British authorities noted, “it was not possible to get at them at the present time”. The invasion of France had left thousands of children as refugees but also blocked off the European continent to British aid. If Canada’s proposed evacuation scheme would go ahead, it appeared that it would be limited to British children. Any exclusionary limitations expressed in the province’s preferences of children would become moot.¹²⁸

While the invasion of France reignited philanthropic and patriotic sentiment in Canada, an uncomfortable tension was brewing in Britain. Thousands of children were

¹²⁷ LAC, MG20-E256, “Charlotte Whitton Fonds”.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

re-evacuated to the British countryside, but some British parents had come to question the safety of the island. In 1939, 253 British children under the age of sixteen made their way to Canada to live with relatives and family friends.¹²⁹ The cost of just the ocean passage was £15, which equated to the monthly salary of approximately three-quarters of the British population.¹³⁰ The movement was consequently reserved for those of the upper class who could afford the transport fee. The events of spring 1940 brought this issue of inequality starkly to the foreground. The children of Britain's elite, it seemed, were worthy of being protected from the horrors of war while the remaining British population had few options. The issue was exacerbated when the British government declared in June 1940 that anyone leaving Britain could only take a maximum of 10 pounds sterling out of the country. Even if a family could scrape enough together to pay for the ocean passage, the financial responsibility of caring for the child would have to fall on the Canadian host family. To inform the public, the British Treasury outlined the regulation in an article in the *Times*. British parents were also required to sign a declaration stating that they would not transfer funds either in foreign currency or in sterling.¹³¹ Even when British parents arranged to repay hosts after the war, Canadians would shoulder the full burden of maintaining the child for the unknown duration of the war. The monetary limit also meant that even if mothers traveled to Canada with their children, financial burdens would not be lessened. Flight Lieutenant Morris wrote to the *Times*, for instance, demanding an amendment to the regulation as he sought to send his wife and their four young children to Canada. His family, he noted, "would arrive in Canada virtually destitute".¹³²

¹²⁹ Author's Evacuee Database.

¹³⁰ TNA, DO 131/29, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Public Accounts Committee". Also quoted in Lin, "National Identity and Social Mobility" (1996): 313.

¹³¹ "Migration of Children: No Transfer of Currency to be Allowed", *Times*, June 24, 1940. This was supposed to preserve the national foreign exchange resources.

¹³² "Money for Migrants", *Times*, June 20, 1940. Morris' letter was in response to a letter by Donald Paterson to the editor calling for a relaxation in the monetary regulation. He noted, "it is obvious that there is a widespread desire on the part of parents to send their children abroad in the next few days or weeks to places of greater safety". For those women and children who still voyaged to Canada, finances became a serious problem. They often felt reliant on and an awkward debt to their family hosts. If they arrived without a support network, many women were faced to not only take up jobs but look to charities and voluntary services for assistance. The St. George's Society of Toronto provided funds and clothing for

One British mother wrote to Mass Observation to explain that she had just returned from America and left her child with relatives for the duration of the war. Her entry not only shows that she was one such family that could afford to evacuate their child independently, but also the fears that faced parents. Questioning the safety of Britain, Mrs. McDougall wrote upon her return, “after the Fall of France, I am quite ashamed to say, I quite expected Britain to be beaten. I thought all sorts of horrors from being machine gunned on the roads to catching epidemics, were lying ahead of us, and that it was up to me to save my child from them”.¹³³ Such opportunities were simply not available to many British families, especially those from working-class families in industrial and urban areas that were at the highest risk of bombing. The British public began to protest this inequality.

Sending British children to Canada removed them from physical danger of the expected invasion and aerial bombardment of Britain. Even if the danger of being struck by a bomb was low, evacuation would also protect the children from the emotional and psychological trauma or nervousness that, it was thought, would be brought on by air raids. The argument was also made that men would be better able to serve if they were assured that their children were safe from war.¹³⁴ A letter to the editor published in the *Manchester Guardian* even argued that “our safety of a fortress, our chance of victory, depends on our troops, all our men, being free to go on fighting and working without looking over their shoulder”.¹³⁵ Evacuation also had the benefit of removing those who were unable to contribute to the war effort. This would clear space and lessen the drain on resources, particularly food. This became known as the useless mouths argument.¹³⁶ Having British children safe abroad would be good for public morale. Evacuees, it was

some such women in Toronto. This left many British middle-class women feeling degraded and depressed. Such a case is featured in Lynn Reid-Banks’ semi-biographical children’s story, *Uprooted* (2014).

¹³³ Mass Observation (MO), Topic Collection 5-2-F, Evacuation 1939-1944, “Evacuation of Children Overseas 1940”, Letter by M. McDougall, December 23, 1940.

¹³⁴ Britain. *House of Commons*, debates, June 18, 1940. 5th series, vol 362.

¹³⁵ “Letter to the Editor, Sending Children Overseas: the Military Reasons”, *Manchester Guardian*, June 27, 1940.

¹³⁶ Britain. *House of Commons*, debates, July 17, 1940, 5th series, vol 363.

argued, could also act as ambassadors to Britain and could fuel the war effort, particularly useful in garnering support from then neutral United States. The plan even satisfied followers of eugenics; if Britain did lose the war, Canada would become protector of the British race. Canada had even been proposed as a safe haven for the British monarchy, particularly Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. Queen Elizabeth apparently dismissed the idea, stating that her children would not leave without her, she would not leave without the King, and the King would never leave Britain. Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, her husband Prince Bernhard, and their two children Beatrix and Irene had taken up such an offer and fled to Canada in 1940 and remained until the end of the war.¹³⁷

Yet there was still opposition to the idea of evacuating British children to Canada. Some thought it was cowardly, especially when mothers fled with their children at the time that their country needed them most. For others, the dangers of transporting children were too great. In responding to a Mass Observation questionnaire as to whether one would send their child overseas, one anonymous person wrote “I won’t, as once at sea the Germans will make a dead set at them”.¹³⁸ If the children did arrive safely, some people objected to evacuation because they held the view that evacuees would have little in common with their peers upon return. This argument was posed in “The New Europe” printed in the *Times*. The article led to responses from people like Hugh McIntosh who argued that Britain’s long-standing policy of “women and children first” should continue. According to McIntosh, the children would not lose out by being removed from the war zone and instead they would “feel all the more grateful when they return to ‘the new Europe’ you so eloquently describe”.¹³⁹ Others did not object to evacuation but did object to the inequality of private evacuation, as only the rich could afford to send their children to safety.

¹³⁷ “Royal Evacuees”, *Manchester Guardian*, February 13, 1942. In January 1943, Princess Juliana gave birth to a third daughter, Princess Margriet. To ensure the child could rightfully claim Dutch citizenship, the Ottawa maternity hospital wing was temporarily declared international territory. The family lived in Stornoway in Rockcliffe Park in Ottawa, which is now the official residence for the Canadian Leader of the Opposition. Evacuees who were sent to Ottawa recall instances of crossing paths with the Royal family.

¹³⁸ MO, Topic Collection 5-2-F, Evacuation 1939-1944, “Evacuation of Children Overseas 1940”, “Attitude to sending children overseas”, June 14-20, 1940.

¹³⁹ “Children Overseas”, *Times*, July 6, 1940.

Just as Canada's offer fuelled Canadians' desire help, it also worked to fuel British anxiety. The issue was brought up in the House of Commons to Geoffrey Shakespeare, the Under-Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, soon after the Canadian government made its official offer. On June 4, Robert Gibson, who represented Greenock for the Labour Party, asked Shakespeare "what steps he has taken with regard to evacuating children from the United Kingdom to Canada and to Australia?", to which Shakespeare replied that "the matter is receiving urgent consideration" and that he hoped to be able to make an official comment on the subject in the near future.¹⁴⁰ This reply evidently did not satisfy the House as the next day Mr. Parker directed a similar question to Shakespeare, asking "whether he will consider taking advantage, as shipping space becomes available, and on the voluntary basis, of the offers made by the Dominion Governments to take children, and other evacuees?"¹⁴¹ Although Shakespeare referred the member back to his response from the previous day, Mr. Parker's question represented both some fundamental elements of the proposed evacuation and the anxiousness of Britons to take up Canada's offers.

In response to those offers, the Canadian conference, and growing tensions in Britain, an Inter-Departmental Committee was formed on June 7, 1940 in Britain. With Geoffrey Shakespeare as Chairman, the committee was "to consider offers from overseas to house and care for children". This originally included children from the European war zone. Representatives from the Home Office, Foreign Office, Ministry of Pensions, Scottish Office, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, Board of Education, Ministry of Shipping, Treasury, and the Dominions Office comprised the committee, representing the various offices that would need to be involved in such a scheme. The overseas scheme needed to be compared to the domestic evacuation program which required collaboration from the Board of Education and the Ministry of Labour and National Service had to advise on the age and type of evacuee that would be permitted to leave Britain.¹⁴² The committee soon set to work in drafting a report and line of recommendation. As the

¹⁴⁰ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard, June 4, 1940, 5th series, vol 361.

¹⁴¹ Britain, *House of Commons*, Hansard, June 5, 1940, 5th series, vol 361.

¹⁴² TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

committee worked away, Shakespeare was questioned vigorously in the House of Commons on the topic of evacuation. On June 12, Mr. Thorne asked “how the children are to be got over in safety?” to which Shakespeare replied that it was “the crux of the whole matter”. If the Dominions offered homes and Britons were willing to send their children, then transportation was potentially the biggest problem. During the same sitting, another member Tom Smith, Labour MP for Normanton, inquired of Shakespeare whether “organisations like the council of the Fairbridge Farm School [will] be consulted?”¹⁴³ The Fairbridge Schools had facilitated the emigration of British children to the Dominions, opening its first child “farm school” which acted as a home for boy and girl immigrants, in 1935 on Vancouver Island.¹⁴⁴ Smith’s question called for the planning of any evacuation to be facilitated in consultation with those who had experience in childcare. Shakespeare’s response, that his committee was “anxious to consult every organisation that has knowledge of emigration and evacuation questions”, addressed Smith’s concern and suggested that those with experience in emigration and evacuation would be sought out.

After much deliberation and many hours of meetings, Shakespeare’s committee produced a report with the first recommendation that the offers from Canada (and by then, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa) should be “gratefully acknowledged and a scheme should be agreed for receiving children from Great Britain”.¹⁴⁵ The scheme would call for a “proper cross-section of the child population to be sent overseas” as a way to ease public tensions about private evacuation. The report then outlined its recommendations on how the plan should function. The name of the scheme should be the “Children’s Overseas Reception Board”. To help facilitate it, the United Kingdom High Commissioner in each of the receiving Dominions would be charged with the responsibility of maintaining contact with CORB and “a suitable person from this country

¹⁴³ Britain, *House of Commons*, Hansard, June 12, 1940, 5th series, vol 361.

¹⁴⁴ Fairbridge, like Dr. Barnardo’s, has come under criticism for abuse. However, at the time, the group was perceived to be performing a good service. See Helen Borrell, “The Fairbridge Farm School”, *British Columbia Historical News*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Winter 1995/96): 17-23, Patrick Dunae, “Child Emigrants, Child Welfare and the Fairbridge Society in British Columbia, 1931-1951” in *Child and Family Welfare in British Columbia*, Diane Purvey and Christopher Walmsley eds. (Calgary: Detselig, 2005).

¹⁴⁵ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

should be specially appointed to his staff for this purpose”.¹⁴⁶ Eligible children would have reached the age of five but be under the age of sixteen. Individuals over the age of sixteen were prohibited from leaving Britain unless their journey was of national importance. It was imperative that youth about to enter the labour market not be sent away, thereby reducing Britain’s much needed manpower. Parents were excluded from the scheme, but would be allowed to nominate relatives or friends whom they wished to care for their children. A system of nomination would be included in the plan to match the children with nominated homes. To ensure that no children were rejected on medical grounds upon arrival overseas, each child was to have a medical test. The standards of such exams would be established with Dominion authorities.¹⁴⁷ Unlike domestic evacuation, this scheme would not limit children by their location in Britain. Children residing in neutral, evacuated, or reception areas would all be free to apply. Parents would have to send an application for each child to register for the scheme. For children attending grant-aided schools, parents would forward their applications to the local education authority. Parents with children attending independent and boarding schools would be required to apply directly to the board.

Once selected, children would be escorted from their homes to the point of embarkation by local education authorities. Specially selected escorts with assistance from trained nurses and doctors would accompany children on the ocean voyage. The report made it very clear that there was to be no direct financial transactions between British parents and Canadian hosts but parents would have to contribute funds for their child’s maintenance. To ensure that the scheme made overseas evacuation available to children of various social and economic backgrounds, the parents of children at grant-aided schools would only be required to contribute the amount for domestic evacuation. For this, British parents contributed up to nine shillings a week per child for the cost of billeting. This money went to the government which in turn paid the evacuees’ billets. CORB parents had a sliding scale for their contributions. CORB parents were able to pay

¹⁴⁶ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, “Children’s Overseas Reception Board”. Shakespeare, *Let the Candles Be Brought In*, (1949), 45.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”. Inter-departmental Committee on the Reception of Children Overseas Report, June, 1940.

just six shillings a week per child. If parents were unable to contribute six shillings, their contribution would be assessed in relation to their means. The funds would be sent to CORB, but would not be forwarded to Canadian foster parents. Children from grant-aided schools would also receive free transportation. The children from non-grant-aided schools might, however, be asked to contribute more to the expenses of the scheme. Although this contribution rate could be decreased having regard to family circumstances, parents of these children would be expected to pay a “reasonable steamship fare”. Very importantly, the report stipulated that even though the cost of the scheme could not be estimated (particularly because the contributions from the host countries were unknown), the British government should contribute a flat rate for the maintenance of each child, regardless of what the parents actually contributed. Similarly, the British government would pay for sea transportation.¹⁴⁸

These recommendations, however, only applied to British children. The committee had to respond to the concerns over the plight of “Allied Refugee Children”, as the report referred to them. Newspapers in Britain and Canada had been reporting on the “horrors in Belgium” using photographs of children, dirty and destitute, as they sought shelter and safety.¹⁴⁹ As the Canadian conference report outlined, it would be impossible to retrieve refugee children from Europe for shelter in either Britain or Canada. However, by 1940 there were hundreds of European Jewish children who had migrated to Britain prior to the war through the Kindertransport and some European children and orphans who had sought refuge in Britain.¹⁵⁰ Britain had accepted, although on a limited scale, German Jewish families before the war. German Jewish refugees Mr. and Mrs. Ludwig Korn and their son Gerd, for instance, were able to escape to Britain,

¹⁴⁸ This fare would be assessed with regard to “the rate which might be paid by a migrant”. Hosts were not paid until 1942 and then they received only a flat rate that therefore did not necessarily align with the parents’ contributions. TNA, DO 131/29, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Public Accounts Committee”, TNA, DO 131/58, “Financial Basis of CORB”. Inter-departmental Committee on the Reception of Children Overseas Report, June, 1940.

¹⁴⁹ “War’s Horrors in Belgium”, *Winnipeg Tribune*, May 28, 1940.

¹⁵⁰ See Vera Fast, *The Children’s Exodus* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011). In 1937, 4000 Spanish children from Bilbao, Spain were brought to Britain by voluntary societies and with the assistance of the National Joint Committee. The Kindertransport movement brought Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. For more see: Andrea Hammel and Bea Lewkowitz, eds. *The Kindertransport to Britain* (Leiden: Rodopi, 2012).

arriving in August 1939 just before war broke out.¹⁵¹ Some refugee and Kindertransport children were able to participate in the domestic evacuation scheme; Gerd Ludwig went to Dunstable, Bedfordshire, where he had a difficult time with his billet. Although warmly received by his billeted foster parents, another evacuee boy in the household was horrible to Gerd and “jeer[ed] him for being a German”.¹⁵² The British report considered that some refugee children in Britain would want to participate in overseas evacuation and argued that the committee was “anxious that they should take their proper place within the scheme”. Unlike British children who would be in education, refugee children, the report outlined, would not normally be attending school and therefore applications for overseas evacuation would be sent through their local housing authority. Whilst refugee children like Gerd Ludwig could be evacuated domestically, those from Germany or Austria could be excluded from the overseas scheme. The report’s observation that Allied children should take their “proper place” within the scheme may have sounded welcoming but may have just as easily been an exclusionary tactic. The report cemented this position by stating that refugee children would be accepted “in so far as the overseas countries are prepared to receive these children”.¹⁵³ This ultimately pushed the onus back onto Canada.¹⁵⁴ The policy was made even clearer when Colonel Wedgewood in the House of Commons inquired whether the children of German Jews residing in Britain could be included in the scheme. Shakespeare subtly explained his “immediate task [was]

¹⁵¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Nancy Korn”. Dr. Mattuck’s Refugee Committee, under the Auspices of the United Charities Fund, provided a guarantee for the family and facilitated their entry into Britain. They received their visas at the end of July 1939 and made it to England at the end of August 1939, only about a week or so before war broke out.

¹⁵² On December 4, 1939, Gerd’s foster mother wrote to his mother describing his difficulties. She wrote “George comes from a poor home; poor both in the sense of lack of money and of culture, though his parents are, I believe, respectable and well meaning. He feels that he is inferior to Gerd in every way but size and so bullies him. He also jeers at him for being a German. He does not understand how cruel this is, and though he has certainly stopped jeering at him in my presence, I fear he still does so behind my back”. Nancy Korn, Private Collection.

¹⁵³ One restriction was that the scheme would not apply to Allied refugee children who were already in employment. TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”. Inter-departmental Committee on the Reception of Children Overseas Report, June, 1940.

¹⁵⁴ Similarly, although orphans were included in outline, the report stated that no offers to accommodate orphanages had been received. Instead, individual children in orphanages “who might be suitable for reception overseas” would be considered. Chapter two will show however that orphans may have been more likely to be rejected through the selection process. Chapter 3 will show that no CORB evacuees were listed as being “orphans” upon arrival in Canada nor were orphanages sent as a large unit.

to administer this scheme in harmony with the wishes of the Dominion governments”. Instead of explicitly answering “no”, Shakespeare ambiguously stated that “it was generally agreed that the first group should come from the children of Allied refugees”.

¹⁵⁵ Whether the first or last group, German Jewish children would not be included in the scheme.

The Canadian report had only made stipulations for European refugee children not residing in Britain, although the provincial “preferences” would provide some guidance, particularly for the selection of Jewish refugees in Britain. There was certainly anti-German sentiment in Canada, even among those who had pledged their services as foster parents. The Canada-wide survey conducted by the Voluntary Registration of Canadian Women questioned whether women would take in children from Germany or from German-occupied areas. The *Ottawa Journal* reported that “in some cases” women replied that they would take “any but Germans”.¹⁵⁶ That the High Commissioner for Canada in London had clearly specified that “there were not thousands of refugee children available for care either in England or anywhere else” provided a loophole. Canada was told that there were few refugee children in Britain available for evacuation, whilst Britain left the choice of admittance to Canada. This enabled each country to shift the responsibility to the other, making it seem like the other was in control. Despite the outward promise that non-British children would be included, this opacity allowed both countries to neglect this group of children and, instead, wholly preference British children. From both the Canadian conference report and British Inter-departmental report, it was clear that British children were the preferred group for overseas evacuation. Ultimately, the two reports which led to the formation of the scheme show a complex level of trans-Atlantic negotiation. Overseas evacuation was founded on a mutual respect, as Britain had to have Canada’s consent before it could send its children. Evacuation was in no way a scheme whereby Britain used its imperial standing as metropole to force Canada into taking its children.

¹⁵⁵ Britain, *House of Commons*, Hansard, June 25, 1940. 5th series, vol 362.

¹⁵⁶ “Some Won’t Shelter German Children”, *Ottawa Journal*, May 22, 1940.

Overseas evacuation therefore became exclusionary for European children, particularly Jewish children, and preferential towards British children. This was emblematic of Canadian immigration and refugee policy prior to and during the war. In 1938 Britain had accepted approximately 10,000 Jewish children as part of the Kindertransport.¹⁵⁷ Canada and the United States, according to Vera Fast in *The Children's Exodus*, closed their doors. By comparison, Canada responded to the plight of Europeans becoming trapped in the grasp of the Nazis by accepting just over a thousand Sudeten Germans in 1939. Further evidencing the nation's immigration policy, Canada also famously turned away the *St. Louis*, a ship carrying German Jewish Refugees.¹⁵⁸ Irving Abella and Harold Troper in "The Line Must be Drawn Somewhere" argue that Prime Minister King was against permitting Jews into the country for fear of dividing the country; in avoiding a debate over Jewish refugees, the country would remain undivided. Various groups tried to resist this rejection by forming a "Refugee Petition". The Canadian National Committee on Refugees and Victims of Political Persecution (CNCR) even appealed to the government to accept Jewish unaccompanied children, homes and funding for which had already been secured. Blair's memos in the Department of Immigration suggest that he was against such ideas.¹⁵⁹ It was becoming increasingly clear that Jewish and European children were excluded (if even there was no public declaration of such policy) from evacuation whilst British children were perceived as the "right" kind of temporary immigrants.¹⁶⁰

Before any children were evacuated overseas from Britain, the Inter-departmental Committee's report had to be officially accepted by the British government. On June 15, 1940 Shakespeare took the report to Sir John Anderson who endorsed it, and two days later presented it to the War Cabinet at No. 10 Downing Street. In his memoir,

¹⁵⁷ Fast, *The Children's Exodus*, (2011). According to Fast, the success of the movement was because the efforts of the Jewish community in Britain in adopting these children were immediate and well organised.

¹⁵⁸ See Abella and Troper, *None is too Many* (1982) and Abella and Troper, "The Line Must be Drawn Somewhere" in *A Nation of Immigrants* (1998). "B.C. Starts School in Sudeten Colony", *Winnipeg Tribune*, September 30, 1939. There were 500 Sudeten refugees who were placed on a settlement near Tupper, British Columbia.

¹⁵⁹ LAC, R10383-0-6-E, William Lyon Mackenzie Fonds, "Memoranda and Notes".

¹⁶⁰ Irving Abella, and Harold Troper, "Children Who Never Came" in *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1982).

Shakespeare recounted the experience of presenting the report: “I had hardly finished when a messenger came in with a note for the Prime Minister. He read it, and announced to the Cabinet that France had capitulated”. According to Shakespeare, his report was “eclipsed” by the news and subsequently the Secretary of the War Cabinet, Maurice Hankey, after a “completely inconclusive discussion” managed to string together what consensus existed.¹⁶¹ Shakespeare explained “Cabinet Ministers were often surprised on reading the minutes to find what decisions had been taken!”¹⁶² The decision was that the formation of the Children’s Overseas Reception Board and the evacuation of children overseas should go ahead.¹⁶³ Some like Michael Fethney have argued that because of the news from France, Churchill was excluded from the decision. Fethney argues that:

the decision to go ahead with the CORB scheme must have rested with the Cabinet Secretary, rather than a Cabinet vote. This means that CORB and the Government’s overseas evacuation scheme owed its existence to the personal initiative of a senior civil servant who boldly, for better or worse, recorded a decision that had not actually been made and which Winston Churchill was soon to make clear he deplored.¹⁶⁴

Whether there was support within the War Cabinet or not, the Children’s Overseas Reception Board was officially established. On June 19, Lord President of the Council Clement Attlee presented the report to the House of Commons and announced the opening of CORB with Geoffrey Shakespeare as the Chairman. Attlee explained that Shakespeare would be assisted by an advisory council which included individuals such as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, and the Parliamentary Secretaries to the Board of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Pensions.¹⁶⁵

In the days it took to be officially adopted and announced in the British House of Commons, Canadians were anxiously awaiting word of what role they could play. Again,

¹⁶¹ Shakespeare, *Let the Candles Be Brought In* (1949), 245.

¹⁶² TNA, CAB 102/759, Cabinet Office, “Children’s Overseas Reception Board”, Minutes, June 17, 1940. Shakespeare.

¹⁶³ *Let the Candles Be Brought In* (1949), 245.

¹⁶⁴ Fethney, *The Absurd and the Brave*, 38-39.

¹⁶⁵ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard, June, 19 1940. 5th series, vol 362.

the British press picked up on Canadians' eagerness. The *Manchester Guardian* under the title "British Children for Canada?: Dominion Ready", explained that although "so far it has been impossible to obtain the co-operation of the British government", Canada was immediately ready to accept thousands of children through a nation-wide organisation.¹⁶⁶

In the Canadian House of Commons, there was confusion over whether an evacuation scheme would go ahead. On June 19, Richard B. Hanson, leader of the opposition, explained that Britain had ultimate control over shipping but pointed to a Canadian press dispatch that quoted Shakespeare as saying "the plan [overseas evacuation] on a huge scale, would be rushed into operation as soon as the dominions' agreements are obtained". Hanson then asked again whether an official offer had been made, arguing "surely we could immediately absorb a very large number". If Canadians had to wait on Britain for an official scheme, they did not have to wait for individuals who could afford to pay for the ocean passage and for a child's maintenance. Mr. Hanson reinforced this point in the Commons with a letter from Frederick Blair from the Department of Immigration explaining that "relatives and friends may come freely and without delay or "red tape" when they can pay for their own passage and are joining relatives or friends here or are coming with sufficient funds to look after themselves". In reply to Hanson's speech, Prime Minister King confirmed that there had been difficulties in getting shipping facilities but argued that "the readiness, willingness and anxiety of this government to receive evacuated children from the old country is perfectly true. There has been no hesitation with respect to our readiness to handle the matter to fullest extent possible".¹⁶⁷ However, King did go on to mention that the British government was trying to balance other movements for the nation's security. He explained "in the matter of preference they are anxious that we should take first all the interned aliens, secondly that we should take all German prisoners in Britain and thirdly that we should consider the matter of evacuated children" as "interned aliens may be in a position to help parachutists in the event of a bombardment of the British isles, which they are expecting

¹⁶⁶ "British children for Canada?" *Manchester Guardian*, June 18, 1940.

¹⁶⁷ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, Hansard. June 1, 1940. 6th sess, vol 1.

hourly”.¹⁶⁸ Even if Canadians and British parents wanted their children in safety in Canada, the British government had to rank military threat over humanitarian need.

Between CORB’s official establishment and the beginning of children leaving British shores, there was a period of debate and deliberation. The historiography of CORB has simplified this period and failed to align discussions over evacuation in the British House of Commons with those in the Canadian House of Commons. Doing so reveals a bigger picture of the trans-national perspective and negotiation surrounding the movement, and illustrates how Britons and Canadians differed in their concerns. Comparing evacuation discussions in both nations also illustrates Canadian public sentiment and further includes a view of private evacuation. Even though private evacuations similarly came into full swing in 1940, existing literature tends to include them as a faint background to the CORB scheme. This is mostly because historians have struggled to obtain sources that illuminate the private evacuee experience. Investigating the Canadians involved in bringing private evacuees to Canada only strengthens the view that evacuation was rooted in imperial, philanthropic, and humanitarian motivations.

On June 20, 1940, Canadian offers to host British children for the duration of the war were finally answered as the Children’s Overseas Reception Board opened its doors after three weeks of near-constant meetings and negotiations. That morning a short press announcement outlined the scheme for the public.¹⁶⁹ CORB managed to secure a recently requisitioned Thomas Cook premises at 45 Berkeley Street, in London SW1 as its headquarters. The speed with which plans were moving meant that as CORB opened in the morning, staff were being hastily collected from various Government departments. The CORB staff moved in just as personnel and furniture were being removed from the premises. When CORB opened its doors that morning, staff had no idea what would unfold throughout the day. Although the idea of overseas evacuation had been discussed

¹⁶⁸ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, Hansard. June 1, 1940. 6th sess, vol 1.

¹⁶⁹ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

in newspapers over the preceding weeks, there had been no attempt to estimate just how many British parents would react to CORB. Miss Marjorie Maxse, director of CORB, described the first application day as “an avalanche impossible to keep pace with and beyond even a larger staff to cope with.”¹⁷⁰ So many parents showed up to apply for overseas evacuation, Maxse noted, that “the queue continued to lengthen outside. Police had to marshal the crowd down Berkeley Street”.¹⁷¹ By that evening, letters started to pour into the office and it became impossible to sort through all the applications brought in by mail vans. Within only a few days, CORB decided to hire all-night support to sort the incoming letters.¹⁷² At its peak, CORB had 620 employees to deal with paperwork, inquiries, and arrangements. In response to each letter, CORB staff would send an application for parents to read, complete, and return if they were satisfied that overseas evacuation would be the best option for their child/ren. On June 22, Shakespeare made a speech on the BBC to explain how CORB and overseas evacuation would function. Perhaps with the knowledge that the scheme was already proving to be hugely popular, and therefore in an attempt to temper support, or in a desire to make parents fully aware of the risks, Shakespeare highlighted the limitations of shipping availability and the dangers of the ocean crossing “from enemy action, whether it be by air, by submarine or by mine”.¹⁷³ In a similar attempt to dissuade people, the War Cabinet asked the Minister of Information, Duff Cooper, to prepare an appropriate statement indicating that the government did not seek to obstruct the scheme but felt obliged to underline the risks involved, the transport difficulties, and the need to accept that only small numbers of children could ever hope to join the scheme.¹⁷⁴

As CORB opened its doors, Canadians continued to prepare for the children’s impending arrival. With word that a British scheme had officially been put in place, the Canadian government set out to ensure the Canadian public was ready. On June 27, 1940,

¹⁷⁰ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. Fethney, *The Absurd and the Brave* (1990), 41-44.

¹⁷² TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

¹⁷³ TNA, DO 131/2, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “CORB: Chairman’s Broadcast Talk”.

¹⁷⁴ TNA, CAB 65/7/69, War Cabinet Minutes, June 21, 1940.

a week after CORB opened its doors, Crerar gave a lengthy description in the House of Commons on plans for evacuation “in view of widespread interest in this country in the matter of British and refugee children”. Crerar first distinguished British children and refugee children (whom he classified as Belgian and Dutch children) and argued that “the most interest in Canada is the movement of British children”. This statement cemented the fact that the scheme would really only be available to British children. He did, however, remind the House that it was the Canadian government “on its own initiative” that offered to assist British children.¹⁷⁵ Even more, it was grass roots initiative from the Canadian public that eventually goaded the government into making its official offer to Britain. Crerar then took the opportunity to explain how the scheme would function in Canada. The Canadian committee report had formed Canadian policy towards evacuation but neither the report nor the scheme were previously presented to the House. As Crerar explained, to ensure that Canadian immigration standards were met, Canadian medical examiners and immigration officers would be responsible for examining the children before they left for Canada. Careful record-keeping, Crerar argued, would ensure that the children’s identity would be preserved so that they could be reunited with their parents, either in Britain or Canada, at the end of the war.¹⁷⁶ Already thinking of the long-term consequences of evacuation, Canada wanted to ensure that there would not be a postwar mayhem of parents trying to find their children.¹⁷⁷ For the evacuees, their time in Canada would be “a unique adventure”.

The Canadian government would also be responsible for tending to the reception of the children at Canadian ocean ports. The Canadian government would provide rail transportation with “proper meals en route” and during their inter-provincial travel, the children would again be cared for by professionals; nurses were to be placed on every train and an immigration conductor/ress would be placed on each car. Although in Britain the evacuation would be facilitated at the national level, in Canada each province was

¹⁷⁵ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, Hansard. June 27, 1940. 6th session, vol 2.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ For instance, this was to prevent situations that would occur after the war with displaced Polish children. See Lynne Taylor, *Polish children of Tengeru* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2009).

responsible for the “oversight of reception, placement and after-supervision” in which “the services of child welfare and other organisations in the various provinces who have the experience necessary to handle this part of the task” would be utilised.¹⁷⁸ The provinces would receive offers of homes and would then examine suitability. Part of this suitability, as Crerar explained, was that “care will be taken to place children in homes of their own faith”; “Non-Roman Catholic children will be placed in Non-Roman Catholic homes, Roman Catholic children in Roman Catholic homes and Jewish children in Jewish homes”. Despite the opaque rhetoric employed in the Canadian report and CORB, Crerar was still publicly making it appear as though Jewish children would be accepted in the evacuation scheme. This was an attempt to avoid discontent amongst Canadian groups who wanted to admit Jewish refugee children.

Crerar also used his speech as an opportunity to cast the philanthropic and humanitarian desire of Canadians to help evacuees as a worthy contribution to the war effort. Crerar argued that the task of placing children in good private homes in Canada for the duration of the war was “a form of war work which is well worth while. It is measured not by money but by service”. Placing an emphasis on service ensured that anyone could participate in such contributions. Crerar explained “there are many in Canada who cannot offer a home, single persons and others who have not suitable accommodation”. “The possibility of cooperating with some home which has taken a child and sharing the expense of food and clothing”, Crerar argued, would still be a worthy contribution as “the burden will be more equally shared and the circle of those who can help enlarged”.¹⁷⁹ Being a foster parent would come with its own challenges. Canadians, Crerar argued, would surely “sympathise with the difficulties and anxieties of parents in Britain who have to decide on the matter of parting with their children, to be moved thousands of miles away into the care of strangers”. By sharing the common bond of parenthood, this thought would be in the “minds of thousands of Canadian mothers and fathers”. Interestingly, Crerar not only recognised the emotional challenges facing the British parents, but also identified the emotional strain it could put on the children:

¹⁷⁸ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, Hansard. June 27, 1940. 6th session, vol 2.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

“there will be some difficulties. The warmth of the welcome given in some homes may become cooler; in some cases the child, because of the complete change of environment, may become a problem”.¹⁸⁰ While the historiography, particularly of internal evacuation, emphasises the traumatic experience of evacuees, such discussions show that Canada was already conscious of the difficulties that evacuees might face. This understanding would form the basis for the Canadian evacuation scheme. Even before children departed from Britain, Canada was attempting to provide a high level of physical and emotional care for evacuees.

After Crerar’s speech the discussion turned towards the Prime Minister as Mr. Paul Martin asked the speaker if the government needed to respond to a public attack on King in the *Ottawa Journal*. Martin explained that the article read:

English mothers rush to evacuate children. Shakespeare has given up plans for immediate mass evacuation of children from the British Isles to the Dominions. The dangers of transportation and lack of adequate reception facilities were given as reasons. Hitler’s bombers will raid England to-night, to-morrow night and the next night. The battle of Britain has begun. The slaughter of children is beginning.¹⁸¹

Below a picture of a child crying, it read “How’s your conscience, Mr. King? For over a year thousands of Canadian homes have been clamouring for a chance to take the children in, pleading for a place to meet this hour. You have been the obstacle”. The speaker agreed it was a “dastardly attack”, noting that he knew of “nothing better calculated to create disaffection and to hamper war work in Canada”. He even called for the Secretary of State to request a report on the matter by those in charge of press censorship.¹⁸² It was true that the Canadian government had been resistant in correspondence with the Canadian National Committee on Refugees and to some extent the Voluntary Registration of Canadian Women. Even if King had privately opposed accepting and taking responsibility for potentially thousands of British children, it was complications and opposition in Britain that was mostly to blame for the slow action. King may not have pursued the matter as vigorously as he did until the spring of 1940;

¹⁸⁰ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, Hansard. June 27, 1940. 6th session, vol 2.

¹⁸¹ “Calling Canada No Mystery Backers Reply”, *Ottawa Journal*, June 29, 1940.

¹⁸² Ibid.

after all, he would have been easily criticised by both Canadians and Britons if a scheme went ahead that was unorganised, fractious, and caused harm to British children. Instead, King publicly became a scapegoat for the organizational difficulties of the British government that caused such a volatile foundation for CORB and overseas evacuation. The resentment directed at King could have been more accurately pointed at his resistance and that of his government (particularly F.C. Blair) towards the admittance of Jewish European refugees. Finally, as a means of appeasing the people and avoiding tension between the Government and its citizens, at the House of Commons on June 27, Crerar made a long-awaited announcement. Shakespeare notified Canadian authorities that the first shipment of CORB children would sail in the first part of July.¹⁸³ Receiving a cable from the High Commissioner, Crerar enthusiastically announced that it was anticipated that 3,000 children would arrive in Canada by the middle of July, while another 750 would arrive every five days until July 25.¹⁸⁴ The Canadian Press immediately broadcast the news with headlines like “3,000 Child-Refugees Arriving Mid-July”.¹⁸⁵ In a cruel twist, this announcement became a security breach that delayed the arrival of evacuees in Canada. Unwittingly, Crerar had breached security with his announcement and the British Admiralty canceled the voyage.¹⁸⁶

Equally on the minds of Britons, overseas evacuation became a heated topic in the British House of Commons on July 2, 1940. Unlike previous discussions which debated whether evacuation should go ahead or not, this session called particular aspects of evacuation into question as members queried the effects the scheme would have upon the children, their parents, Britain, and the Empire. Despite the great lengths Shakespeare and CORB took to ensure the evacuation was thoroughly planned, MPs became deeply engaged in the scheme with questions, criticisms, and suggestions for its improvement. While some were pleased with the scheme’s progress, others were disappointed with its

¹⁸³ TNA, DO131/39, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “1943 Higher Education and Training”. Bilson, *The Guest Children* (1988), 24.

¹⁸⁴ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, Hansard. June 27, 1940. 6th session, vol 2.

¹⁸⁵ “3,000 Child Refugees Arriving Mid-July”, *Winnipeg Tribune*, June 27, 1940.

¹⁸⁶ TNA, DO131/39, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “1943 Higher Education” and Training”. Bilson, *The Guest Children* (1988), 24.

scale. Eleanor Rathbone, an Independent representative of the Combined English Universities, recognised the correlation between scale and the limited availability of ships and argued that the “spirit of Dunkirk brought into the scheme in the sense that the Dunkirk effort was distinguished by the extraordinary scale of our improvisation”. She inquired as to whether cargo ships returning to Canada could be used to take children, “even though in small numbers only”. CORB had established guidelines for evacuees’ selection which were based mostly on age, what kind of school the child attended, and the level of danger that faced their location. John Tinker, a Labour MP for Leigh, thought that the first group of evacuees should not all come from the same part of the country. Instead, Tinker argued that children should be selected from all over Britain so that “everybody would feel that his part of the country was having a share in the scheme”.¹⁸⁷ This approach made sense as it did not preference one area, but could cause further logistical issues. Another Labour MP, Hubert Beaumont (Batley and Morley) and Eleanor Rathbone (Independent, Combined English Universities) also provided their opinions on the selection of evacuees. The mass of parents who registered their children with CORB and the severe limits on shipping meant that the organization would have to take care in selecting children for overseas evacuation. Some individuals thought that a first-come, first-served process should be used while others felt that mothers who immediately registered their children were all too ready and willing to “get rid” of their children. Rathbone thought that selection should exclude “the wrong kind of child” and ensure that “the children you select have not nasty habits of body or mind, or are not intolerably troublesome and likely to discredit to us in the Dominions”.¹⁸⁸ This concern over sending the “bad apples” of the nation was a recurring theme in such discussions. In the hope of maintaining a sense of propriety and preventing Canadians from thinking British children were ill-behaved, Britain did not want to send children who would be an inconvenience to Canadians.¹⁸⁹ Others felt that Britain should not send the “crème de la crème” of society. David Adams, a Labour representative for the constituency of Consett

¹⁸⁷ Britain. *House of Commons*, Orders of the Day, Hansard, June 19, 1940. 5th series, vol 362.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ As part of this, evacuees were always told before they left to be on their best behaviour whilst in Canada.

argued, “children must be from groups of normal children”. As an answer to this problem, Beaumont suggested that “there should be a cross section of the child community of this land sent abroad” which he defined as meaning “a fair representation of the standard of intelligence...and an excellent representation of the standard of health of the children of th[e] country”.¹⁹⁰ The selection would ultimately fall on CORB authorities. These comments illustrate British perceptions of childhood, with children being of the “wrong kind” or “normal”. Overseas evacuation was viewed as a way to exhibit, quite literally, the health (morally and physically) of the nation.

Before the children could be selected, parents would have to come to the decision to make an application for their child’s evacuation. The historiography of overseas evacuation has taken a cursory view of the role of evacuee parents, usually simply noting that they had to make the decision.¹⁹¹ The historiography has failed to consider the extent to which parental authority was recognised by CORB and, by extension, the government. However, the record demonstrates that, at least in the House of Commons, the parental role was seen as paramount. James Ede, the Parliamentary Secretary, Board of Education), explained to the House that in making the difficult decision “the responsibility is theirs and they must weigh up the risks of this scheme and the risks of remaining at home”. He qualified his statement by noting that “this democratic state believes that this is one of the things about which the individual citizen has to make up his mind for himself”.¹⁹² More than just a simple decision, Ede explained that “the signature of both parents have to be obtained, and this is one of the occasions on which there is absolute equality between the two heads of the households”. If the signatures of both parents were not on the registration papers then the child absolutely would be rejected. This gave mothers a unique equality in the decision-making process while ensuring that one parent could not solely make the decision. Without this requirement, parents could be out of agreement; if something happened to the child, this could cause a messy dispute, not only in the house but for the government if it came under criticism for

¹⁹⁰ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard, July 2, 1940. 5th series, vol 362.

¹⁹¹ For instance, Fethney and Bilson state that parents ultimately made the decision.

¹⁹² Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard, July 2, 1940. 5th series, vol 362.

“snatching” a child away. In a similar vein, the impact that evacuation could have on the family unit was also discussed. The Labour MP for Consett David Adams drew notice to a *Times* article in which a doctor argued that overseas evacuation would “break up the family life of this country”. As a rebuttal, Adams pointed toward the British tradition of sending children to boarding school: “what factor is greater than the public schools of this country in breaking up family life?” he asked.¹⁹³ For middle- and upper-class families, evacuation would simply be a continuation of familial separation. Hubert Beaumont (Labour, Batley and Morley) spoke out to express his thought that the separation of child and parent through evacuation could be emotional. For this reason, Beaumont argued that it would be disastrous and “unwise for the parents to go and see the children off at the port of embarkation” because “it would be upsetting to the children and might occasion great difficulty to those who have charge of the children”. Not only could the children become hysterical, but so could the parents. Beaumont’s idea was seen to have merit as it became standard that CORB parents said their goodbyes at home, at a local gathering spot, or at a school.¹⁹⁴

Discussions in the House also questioned how children would be prepared for their journey. Glenvil Hall, the Labour MP for Colne Valley, inquired as to the possibility of “guard[ing] against some children being excessively homesick” by “sort[ing] them out a little before they actually embark[ed]”. Presumably, Hall was advocating that children who were already homesick should be sent back to their families. James Ede (Labour, Parliamentary Secretary, Board of Education), explained that it would be impossible as “the parent has said that the child is to go and we have said that it is the parent that is to have the final word...if the child develops homesickness, one can only hope that it will get over it on the journey”.¹⁹⁵ Parental authority was taken as the highest authority and would therefore rank above any opinions of CORB authorities. In terms of the emotional care that would be provided to evacuees, Beaumont raised the issue of who would escort the children. He argued that “the teacher may be especially valuable in preparing the children for the life [in] the new Dominion, but not so useful if the child is suffering from

¹⁹³ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard, July 2, 1940. 5th series, vol 362.

¹⁹⁴ Parents of private evacuees would often take their children to the port.

¹⁹⁵ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard, July 2, 1940. 5th series, vol 362.

sea-sickness or other illness or even home-sickness”. The teacher was perceived to have the ability of intellectually preparing the children, but not of caring for them medically and emotionally; that task would fall on the nurses who would accompany the children on the voyage. Furthermore, Ede addressed fears over discipline and delinquency on the ships, particularly with problem boys, noting that if the majority of the children on the ship were boys between the ages of ten and sixteen, a teacher or a similar person used to disciplining would also be on board to keep a watchful eye.¹⁹⁶

Concern over the evacuees’ care once they arrived overseas and how they would be placed into Canadian homes also became a topic of discussion in the House. The issue was raised in particular relation to Canada, as Owen Evans, the Liberal MP for Cardigan, explained that Welsh communities in Canada had contacted people in Wales to organize the reception of Welsh children. Speaking in favour of such placements, Evans recognised the cultural and religious stability that such homes could offer Welsh children: “Wales is the only country in this island, with the exception of a part of Scotland, which has a language of its own...and in Canada there are Welsh communities who preserve their language”. Evans hoped that children could be matched appropriately, as “the children from Wales who may be sent away might feel more at home there”.¹⁹⁷ Ultimately, this would fall to the Canadian provincial authorities unless the parents had nominated a particular Welsh family. Similarly, Conservative MP for Windsor Sir Annesley Somerville, wanted to ensure that there was an efficient and continuous “after-care” once the children arrived in Canada. With the same feeling, James Ede (Labour, Parliamentary Secretary, Board of Education) suggested establishing a scheme for supervising the children and keeping in contact with them. He considered “not a body to meet the children on arrival, but daily contact with each child that shall make him feel that the people in this country still have memories of him and still hope he is coming back to them, while they are watching his interests all the time he is in the

¹⁹⁶ Britain. *House of Commons*, Orders of the Day, Hansard, July 2, 1940, 5th series, vol 362.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

Dominions”.¹⁹⁸ Ensuring that the evacuees did not feel forgotten or lose their attachment to Britain was seen as important.

Part of this concern stemmed from the fact that even by the spring of 1940, the domestic evacuation scheme of 1939 had revealed some serious flaws. For a start, transportation was often confused and haphazard.¹⁹⁹ By December 1939, child psychologists John Bowlby, D.W. Winnicott, and Emanuel Miller wrote to the *British Medical Journal* to reveal that the evacuation of small children between the ages of two and five years old had “introduced major psychological problems”.²⁰⁰ Others identified the emotional troubles that face many domestic evacuees. B. Strachey published “Borrowed Children”, a popular study of the “emotional maladjustments caused or accentuated by the dislocation in the children’s lives”, in 1940.²⁰¹ The emotional struggles led to many foster parents complaining of evacuees’ constant bedwetting. Billeting was perhaps the biggest problem. Compulsory billeting meant thousands of Britons in the countryside had small children thrust upon them. Many had little or no desire to care for them and this led to maltreatment. The state of many billets were later found to be wanting. In one town in Scotland, 150 women and children had been placed in a cold hall; their makeshift bedding of used and filthy mattresses and straw bales had apparently been requisitioned from the town jail.²⁰² On a broader scale, evacuation also served to uncover social problems, poverty, and deep-rooted class tensions.²⁰³ Such discussions over apparent “widespread dissatisfaction” with billeting arrangements had been raised in the Commons as early as February 1940 as the Minister of Health was forced to explain that “all complaints of improper conduct that are received direct by my

¹⁹⁸ Britain. *House of Commons*, Orders of the Day, Hansard, July 2, 1940. 5th series, vol 362.

¹⁹⁹ Macnicol, “The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention” (1986), 12.

²⁰⁰ Letter to the *British Medical Journal* on December 16, 1939 from Donald Winnicott, Emanuel Miller and John Bowlby. Reprinted in Donald Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, eds. Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd, and Madeline Davis (London: Tavistock Publications, 1984): 11-12.

²⁰¹ B. Strachey, *Borrowed Children: A Popular Account of Some Evacuation Problems and their Remedies* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1940).

²⁰² Macnicol, “The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention” (1986), 14.

²⁰³ See Macnicol and Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy* (1950) for more.

Department are at once investigated on the spot”.²⁰⁴ An overseas evacuation scheme, it was hoped, would be more successful. In the House of Commons on June 6, Labour MP for Consett David Adams asked the Minister of Health, Malcolm MacDonald whether he agreed that “private billeting was the prime cause of the failure of the last evacuation scheme”.²⁰⁵ Only ten months after the start of the internal wave of evacuation, there was a clear sense that the internal evacuation had been a “failure”. If overseas evacuation could function and depended upon offers to house children, perhaps the scheme would not be such a failure. To make matters worse, when children flooded home during the Phoney War, the troubles became even worse as schools were closed upon their return. “Children ran wild, untaught and undisciplined”, one newspaper claimed, so much so that “Juvenile Courts found its work increasing daily as Satan assiduously found mischief for idle little hands to do”.²⁰⁶

Just as placement was a concern, so too was the education that evacuees would receive in Canada. An element of evacuation was that the evacuees would receive the same standard of education as the children in the Dominions. Yet because the evacuees would be entering into a new intellectual and cultural educational environment, some felt that the evacuees would need particular preparation or skills in order to cope with the change. Ian Hannah, who represented Wolverhampton Bilston for the Conservative party, explained to the House that “education in the Dominions is naturally quite different from ours in very many ways” and that “these boys and girls who are going to find new homes, must be told before they embark that they have to be adaptable and that they have to live as Canadians for the time being”.²⁰⁷ Above all else, Hannah hoped that “they w[ould] leave behind any idea that the English are superior. I hope that we have got rid for ever the old, rather common Victorian view – soiled goods for the colonies”.²⁰⁸ He further

²⁰⁴ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard. February 1, 1940, 5th series, vol 365. He continued to explain, “in the reception areas the local authority is responsible generally for the supervision of evacuated children, and in such matter the authorities have the assistance of vigilant and hard working voluntary organisations.”

²⁰⁵ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard. June 6, 1940, 5th series, vol 362.

²⁰⁶ “New Exodus of Children Great Strain”, *Toronto Telegram*, August 6, 1940.

²⁰⁷ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard. June 6, 1940, 5th series, vol 362.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

explained that “they will go to the same schools and have the same opportunity. Heredity is believed in very little”. From this, he perceived greater benefit that could come from the evacuation:

I can imagine no greater benefit to this country than that we should have a large number of citizens who have lived during the most formative period of their lives in the dominions and have thoroughly got the Dominion point of view...we must avoid sending out children who cannot look at things from any other point of view than that of the Old Country.²⁰⁹

The Conservative MP for Windsor Sir Annesley Somerville, also identified benefit that could come from the experience of evacuees being educated in Canada, particularly if evacuated as a school unit into a Canadian school. He explained that he had had experience in Canadian schooling and argued that “they [Canadian children] live a spacious life” and that contact between English and Canadian schools “would be all the good” because:

In Canadian schools there is an assembly every morning. There these great schools assemble, perhaps some thousands of pupils and teachers. On the platform are the Union Jack and the Canadian flag crossed, and the schools sing the Canadian and the National anthems. Sometimes there is a short address before school begins. That is how school begins every morning in the Canadian schools. The results of intercourse between an English school and a Canadian school working together would be of immense value to both countries.²¹⁰

Broader implications of evacuation for the evacuees themselves *and* the Empire were also discussed with zeal. Sir Albert Braithwaite, a Conservative representative for Buckrose, argued that a lasting benefit of overseas evacuation would be to “build up strong ties of friendship which will be invaluable in the future”. In this, Braithwaite placed a responsibility upon the evacuees to “go out as little ambassadors from this country, promoting goodwill and fellowship and making substantial contribution to the feelings that others have for us”.²¹¹ Upon the evacuees’ return to Britain, they would “bring to our own island here a knowledge of life overseas which should be of great value in our

²⁰⁹ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard. June 6, 1940, 5th series, vol 362.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid.

Empire-building after the war”. This evacuation was seen as an opportunity to strengthen Imperial relations between Canada and Britain. However, these discussions illustrate that evacuation, as strongly explained by Labour MP for Consett David Adams, was not “intended as a method of expanding the empire or of creating some grand scheme, but as a temporary expedient”. This feeling was reinforced by Lewes’ Conservative representation Tufton Beamish as he exclaimed that “under the stress of war, do not let us forget what the impulse is at present time. It is not an Imperial impulse, but an impulse of quite a different kind”.²¹² Evacuation would first and foremost provide safety for children. That the evacuees in turn could become symbols of the empire was a happy coincidence.

These Imperial terms were clearly defined in the House of Commons, and by Shakespeare and CORB. For the overseas evacuation to work, Canada could not be viewed as an Imperial child of mother Britain. The lengthy queues outside of the CORB headquarters and the piles of registration papers for overseas evacuation show that a significant number of British parents wanted their children to go. In response to suggestions that thousands of children should be sent immediately, individuals such as James Ede, the Parliamentary Secretary for the Board of Education, had to explain that the evacuation scheme was in part also dependent upon the acceptances of Canadians and the Canadian government. No matter how many British parents wanted to evacuate their children, people had to “realize that there matters are still under negotiations with the Dominions, and that the Dominions are sovereign states” as he plainly explained that “we cannot send a shipload of children off to the Dominions as we might send them off to the Isle of Man”. Ede felt the need to drive the point home, warning the House that the Dominions “are as much sovereign states as is the United Kingdom...unless we are prepared to recognise that status and to accept the offer of the Dominions in the spirit in which it has been tendered, by state of equal powers of ourselves, we may land ourselves in very serious difficulties”.²¹³ Ede continued that they had endeavoured to make the Dominions understand that “we recognise them as hosts”. To further frame this

²¹² Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard. June 6, 1940, 5th series, vol 362.

²¹³ Ibid.

relationship and emphasise the need for prudence, Ede stated “as one of our poets said of the Dominions: ‘daughters we are in our mother’s house, but mistress in our own’.

Nevertheless, the Dominions are no longer daughters, or at any rate, they are daughters so grown-up as to be entitled to talk to their mother on equal terms”. This feeling would fuel the negotiations over evacuation and would ensure that overseas evacuation to Canada would have a drastically different outcome than the internal evacuation scheme.

Ultimately, sending children overseas would

enable both adults and children in this country or in the Dominions to play their part more appropriately in the war, and that it may have a lasting effect on the relationship between this country and the great Dominions, and that in sharing the anxieties of this present time, we may be laying the foundations of something that is happier and better than we have know before.²¹⁴

Through these discussions and throughout the evacuees’ experiences, the paradigm of Old and New world was routinely utilised. Ian Hannah, the Conservative representative for Wolverhampton Bilston, best expressed it as he said, “we stand between two worlds, the Old and the New. On one side we have Europe; on the other, the new Dominions, scattered throughout the world. We have two positions among the nations of the world. We are, and must remain, a European power; but, far more important, we are a member of a sisterhood of free nations scattered over the world”.²¹⁵ The Second World War has been cast as a period in which Canada was still becoming independent from Britain. Looking at evacuation suggests that Canada was shedding its child-like colonial status. Not only was strengthening the Empire a benefit of evacuation, but these discussions in the British House of Commons illustrate that the emotional impact on the evacuees during and after their evacuation was already in the minds of Britons, particularly those in seats of power. The child was therefore recognised not only as needing physical protection but also pastoral care. This not only fits within the broader turn-of-the-century trend of recognising the plight of the child, but also points towards an emerging awareness of the child as being in need of the physical, nutritional, emotional, and educational care that would form the welfare state in the post-war period.

²¹⁴ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard. June 6, 1940, 5th series, vol 362.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

While debates and plans for CORB emerged across the ocean, throughout June and July 1940 Canadians continued to make offers to host children. Public declaration through newspapers continued with headlines such as “offers from Ontario home owners, clubs and lodges [ran] into thousands” continued unabated.²¹⁶ Five insurance men from Toronto anonymously put two large homes at the disposal of the Ontario Department of Public Welfare for the use of evacuees and free medical attention was assured for evacuees in Fredericton.²¹⁷ There were still many more Canadians and Canadian organisations who in the summer of 1940 offered to facilitate the evacuation of groups of children in Britain. Existing literature on evacuees in Canada tends to focus on the establishment of CORB and the experiences of CORB children.²¹⁸ Relegating private evacuees to the periphery gives the impression that private evacuees were either less important or fewer in numbers. Neither was true and organisations and individuals in Canada who sent offers did so with similar humanitarian, philanthropic, and Imperial motivations.

Canadians exercised professional and organisational links with Britain. Rotary Clubs in Canada offered places in Canadian homes to the children of British Rotarians. By the end of June, members of the Manchester Rotary Club received application forms for the private scheme that would provide homes, care, and education for the children at no cost to British parents.²¹⁹ On June 17, 1940, the University of Toronto’s Women’s War Service Committee decided to take up the cause by establishing a sub-committee to help facilitate the evacuation of British children. Utilising professional connections, the committee sought to bring the children of British university professors into Toronto university homes and began contacting various British universities with offers of

²¹⁶ “Ontario Homes are Waiting for Refugees”, *Globe and Mail*, June 27, 1940. “Official Word Speeds Plans for Refugees”, *Globe and Mail*, June 29, 1940.

²¹⁷ “Five Insurance Men Give Evacuees Homes”, *Globe and Mail*, June 22, 1940. “Free Medical Attention Assured Child Refugees”, *Globe and Mail*, June 29, 1940.

²¹⁸ Fethney, Bilson, and Starns for example. Bilson mentions that groups like Rotary made offers but does not progress much further in an analysis.

²¹⁹ “Sending Children Overseas”, *Manchester Guardian*, June 28, 1940. British parents would still have to pay for ocean and rail transportation costs.

accommodation.²²⁰ The university magazine reflected the committee's efforts, noting that "Campus homes are not usually homes of luxury. They do, however, offer those advantages and influences of university life to which these children have been accustomed and in which they are most likely to find happiness".²²¹ McGill University, in concert with the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario, made similar offers of assistance.²²² The Canadian branches of Kodak and the Ford Motor Company also made offers to employees in Britain. The Law Society of Upper Canada offered to take the children of judges and barristers in Britain.²²³ The 36th Ulster Division Old Comrades' Association even received offers from "Ulster People Resident in Ontario" although the need to evacuate Northern Ireland en masse never emerged.²²⁴

Schools were particularly willing to do their part. The Headmasters and Headmistresses Association of Canada announced in June that they were "willing at once and during the coming school year to look after as many boys and girls from Britain as their schools can hold and the schools will do everything in their power to facilitate the transfer of children".²²⁵ Boarding and independent schools across Canada, such as Havergal College (Toronto), King's Edgehill (Nova Scotia), Alma College (St. Thomas), and St. Andrew's College (Aurora), all offered to take in evacuees.²²⁶ Not only did such institutions feel prepared to assist the evacuees due to their expertise in childcare, but the majority of the schools also had long-standing connections to Britain. Havergal, named after the English composer, author, and humanitarian Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879), had a foundation as an Anglican school for girls; its British teachers and its dedication to maintaining British values (particularly within the boarding house) made

²²⁰ University of Toronto Archive (UTA), B1968-0002/001 (03), "University of Toronto, Women's War Service Committee".

²²¹ UTA, B1968-0002/004 (13), "University of Toronto, Women's War Service Committee".

²²² McGill University, 0002, File 03096, Refugee Children, "McGill contribution offers".

²²³ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, Hansard. July 2, 1940. 6th sess, vol 2.

²²⁴ "Offer Homes for Children from Ulster", *Toronto Telegram*, August 2, 1940.

²²⁵ Bilson, *The Guest Children*, 12.

²²⁶ LAC, MG30-D245, "Frederick James Ney Fonds".

the school feel like a transplanted British community.²²⁷ Already functioning as a home for girls, the College also recognized that it had the unique ability to accept a large number of children as it already had the necessary care facilities. As evidence suggests that most of the evacuees sent to Havergal had been at boarding schools in Britain before the war, entering into a British-based Canadian boarding school would have been a familiar experience for the evacuees.

Such imperial and religious connections also motivated various philanthropic groups to seek out ways to assist evacuees. Toronto charitable organizations, the Anglican St. George's Society of Toronto for example, recognised the plight of British children as children of the motherland and saw an opportunity to continue its charitable work and utilise its strong connection to Britain to benefit the child evacuees. Taking its name from England's patron saint, the society was established in 1834 to assist English and Welsh immigrants.²²⁸ By July 1940, it had received offers from twenty-five members who would take twenty-nine children, and found further offers to care for more if maintenance were provided.²²⁹ Even if they were not able to fully support an evacuee, various other religious and philanthropic groups such as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire pledged to do their bit for the cause. In July 1940 for example, Montreal's first company of "Farmerettes", a division of the Women's Voluntary Reserve Corps, started work on a "small market gardening scheme to raise produce for institutions in th[e] city caring for British children".²³⁰ With similar sentiments, thousands of Canadians offered to "open their hearts and homes" to children of distant family members, friends, and even business acquaintances. During the summer months of 1940, thousands of letters would crisscross the Atlantic as Britons and Canadians privately and often individually tried to organise children's passage to safety. Marie Williamson in Toronto, already mother to two small children of her own, sat down to write to her cousin

²²⁷ Mary Byers, *Havergal: Celebrating a Century, 1894-1994* (Erin: Boston Mills Press, 1994), 110. "History and Tradition", Havergal College, accessed 19 November, 2013, <http://www.havergal.on.ca>.

²²⁸ "About Us", The St. George's Society of Toronto, accessed 20 November, 2013. <http://www.stgeorges.to/index>,

²²⁹ COTA, St. George's Society Meeting Minutes, Fonds 1575, Series 10823, File 39, "Minutes of Meetings of Sub-Committee on Evacuee Children", 1940-1945".

²³⁰ "Farmerettes Plant so Evacuees May Eat", *Montreal Gazette*, July 25, 1940.

Margaret Sharp in England. Offering to take care of Margaret's three sons: "the more children we can have out of England the better we will be pleased" promising that she, her family, and her friends would "clothe and look after the boys just as though they were [their] own".²³¹

The large number of British parents seeking to send their children overseas caused the War Cabinet to become wary of a mass exodus.²³² Just two weeks after announcing the scheme, CORB had received 211,000 applications. British parents thought that having their children away from Britain was worth the risks of getting them to safety. Prime Minister Winston Churchill, on the other hand, felt that overseas evacuation would suggest that Britain could not protect its own. In the War Cabinet he argued that "a large movement of this kind encourages a defeatist spirit... entirely contradictory to the true facts of the position, and it should be sternly discouraged".²³³ The evacuation of British forces from France in the weeks prior had been a big enough blow and Churchill feared that evacuation of children would make it appear as though the nation could no longer protect its youngest.²³⁴ After all, in his now famous speech "We Shall Fight on the Beaches" made in the House of Commons on June 4, Churchill declared "wars are not won by evacuations".²³⁵ Although his speech referred to Dunkirk, the sentiment was equally applicable to children. Penny Starns argues that Churchill was not totally opposed to evacuation: "it is obvious that Shakespeare was given the task of planning for overseas evacuation because the Prime Minister and other government ministries intended to

²³¹ Canadian War Museum (CWM), 58A.1.273.47, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family".

²³² Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy*, 103.

²³³ NA, CAB65/189/ (40)7, Cabinet Office, July 1, 1940. Churchill reiterated this statement in the house of Commons on July 18, 1940.

²³⁴ Geoffrey Shakespeare in his memoir recorded that sometime after CORB was announced, Mrs. Clementine Churchill called him to ask whether he could stop Churchill's great-niece, Sally Churchill from being evacuated privately to America. Shakespeare noted that if word got out that one of Churchill's relatives had left Britain, Lord Haw Haw would have a field day. Although Churchill apparently had no knowledge of Sally's impending evacuation, Shakespeare managed to get Sally's passport withheld. She remained in Britain for the course of the war. Shakespeare apparently did not resent Churchill for his opinion as he was "always a fighter" and "any policy that would give the slightest impression of the weakening of national morale, such as would have resulted from any wholesale evacuation of children overseas". Shakespeare, *Let the Candles be Brought In*, 246.

²³⁵ Britain. *House of Commons*, Hansard, June 4, 1940. 5th series, vol 361.

seriously consider this migration as a feasible option”.²³⁶ Looking closely at the pressures from British and Canadian civilians proves that the British government responded to public tensions and had to seriously consider overseas evacuation as an option. Starns points towards the fact the Churchill in his “We Shall Fight on the Beaches” speech argued that Britain would continue to use Dominion forces to fight: “Sending British children to the Dominions, therefore was a means of strengthening this resolve and a way of preparing these same children for the task of fighting for their country from across the seas”. Evacuation would become an effective way to maintain and strengthen the bond between Britain and Canada, but using Dominion forces was not evidence of Churchill’s agreement for the scheme. As further evidence, Starns points towards Churchill’s House of Commons speech on July 18, 1940 in which he thanked the Dominions for the kind offers and noted that “they will take pains to make sure that in the use that is made of these offers there shall be no question of rich people having an advantage, if advantage there be, over poor”. Starns fails to see this as Churchill’s attempt to continue to quell public tensions over private evacuation and seems to forget that what the Prime Minister had to say in the House was not necessarily his personal opinion and could be very different from what went on behind closed doors.

On July 1, the War Cabinet decided to “call a halt to this scheme and without killing it, to ensure that it was kept to quite small proportions”.²³⁷ The Cabinet wanted to shut down CORB completely. Within the Cabinet meeting, the First Lord of the Admiralty A. V. Alexander argued that the most serious practical problems facing CORB were the lack of sufficient shipping for large groups of children, the problem of finding suitable naval escorts for convoys, and balancing the more pressing need of removing enemy aliens to Canada.²³⁸ CORB required that all ships carrying evacuees travel in a convoy. The next day, *Arandora Star* was ferrying German and Italian prisoners of war to Canada when it was torpedoed and sunk off the coast of Ireland.²³⁹ Not only was this a

²³⁶ Starns, *Oceans Apart*, 23.

²³⁷ TNA, CAB 65/8/179, Cabinet Office, July 1, 1940.

²³⁸ Fethney, *The Absurd and the Brave*, 49-50.

²³⁹ Bilson, *The Guest Children*, 25.

stark sign of the dangers that lurked in the Atlantic, but it became an opportunity for the Cabinet. Two days later, on July 4, the Cabinet moved to suspend CORB.²⁴⁰ CORB would continue to proceed with its plans, but its doors were closed to any further applications. For British parents who had not already registered their children, the window of opportunity had closed. The news also meant that Canada seemingly would not receive the tens of thousands of children that some Canadians were hoping for. All that was left was for British parents to await news of their child's embarkation orders and for Canadians to await for news of their arrivals. A *Globe and Mail* article symbolized the nation's readiness: "our preparations have been in order for some weeks...we are still prepared to receive and place thousands of children in a few hour's notice".²⁴¹ As a transnational representation of Canadian support, the *Globe and Mail* ran a roll call: "New Brunswick Ready, 100 offers in Alberta, Nova Scotia Willing, Welcome in Montreal, Prairies are Ready".²⁴²

Although Canadians had offered to provide safe homes for British children at three different points during the war, each time with more vigour and conviction, Canada's calls were only answered when the threat of an invasion of Britain became dire. Overseas evacuation was a product of the mid-twentieth century rather than simply the Second World War. This created a westward migration as European Jewish children fled to Britain for safety, but then British children moved to Canada. This came to be almost a double standard as Britain was deemed "safe" to Jewish children but not safe enough for British children. Although there was some opposition in Canada and Britain for various reasons, the Children's Overseas Reception Board was formed to enable children from *all* social classes to access evacuation. Debates in the British and Canadian House of Commons illustrated that planning such a transnational, temporary migration in wartime was challenging and complex. That the children became the centre of such debates

²⁴⁰ TNA, CAB 67/7/179, Cabinet Office, July 9, 1940.

²⁴¹ "Preparation Going Forward for Weeks", *Globe and Mail*, July 17, 1940.

²⁴² "Survey Reveals 10,000 Canadian Homes Ready for Children", *Globe and Mail*, June 22, 1940.

illustrates their perceived importance and status. In all of its careful planning, Canada endeavoured to provide the highest level of care for the children. A four-tiered system emerged whereby the national, provincial, and municipal governments and local authorities would be responsible for children. Overseas evacuation would function on almost an entirely different set of guidelines to internal evacuation.

While some historians have pointed to the Second World War as Canada's political move away from Britain and towards the United States, the evacuation illustrates that Canadians were still deeply connected to Britain. It was these connections that the plight of British children stirred. The outpouring of offers from Canadians to house evacuees illustrates that evacuation was by no means a heavy-handed attempt by Britain to inflict unwanted, unloved, and useless children on its former colony. Canadians called for overseas evacuation as a philanthropic, humanitarian, and practical way of protecting Britain's children, and it was cast as an opportunity for Empire-building. This concept of building up the Empire did not overshadow or fail to recognise Canada's Dominion status. Throughout the interwar period and upon the outbreak of the Second World War, Canada was still closely linked to Britain. Canada was able to fulfill its role as a good Imperial daughter, but was simultaneously able to stand alone – a position that the war would only reaffirm. Evacuation was dependent upon strong connections to Britain; Canadians helped British children because they were from the same Imperial family but did so on Canadian terms with national patriotism. This would set the stage for how Canada would care for evacuees throughout the war. These motivations, sentiments, and connections were ultimately so strong that thousands of Canadians freely and willingly agreed to take children (sometimes those of strangers) into their homes, their lives, and their hearts for an unknown duration. Finally, by July 1940 the anxious waiting of Canadians and Britons was coming to an end. However, first parents would have to make the heart-wrenching decision of whether or not to send their children out onto the dangerous seas.

Chapter Two

“Fit” for Evacuation: From Planning to Arrivals

The mathematical chances of being killed by a bomb are small. That is not the reason we are sending our children to Canada. It is because we want to protect them from the nervous and physical strain of taking them from their beds, night after night, and sometimes several times a night, and putting them into an air raid shelter in the back yard...we parents feel that once we have put our children into safety we can roll up our sleeves and make a better job of dealing with the Nazis.¹

An article in the *Halifax Chronicle* recorded the feelings of many British parents in the summer of 1940. By July 1940, as predicted by Winston Churchill, the Battle of Britain, or what some called the battle *for* Britain, began with full force. It was under Britain’s dogfight-filled skies that parents made the difficult decision to evacuate their children to Canada. The battle’s three-month span between July and October directly mirrored overseas evacuation; July saw the departure of the first CORB ship whilst October witnessed the end of CORB and the final trickle of private evacuees into Canada. Using this temporal guide, this chapter examines how evacuation transitioned from a proposed scheme into a transnational migration of thousands of children. A consideration of the parents’ deliberations, their children’s selection process, the process of Canadians becoming foster parents, and the vast transportation arrangements made by both Britain and Canada illustrate that evacuation was a scheme that drew participants from different areas of Britain and Canada and various social and governmental groups. Overseas evacuation became a fluid process of decision-making, transnational negotiations, and revised planning. The children’s experiences of their ocean passage and journey across Canada demonstrate that authorities exercised a high standard of care. This process also played a major role in determining the distribution of children across the provinces. These experiences became the beginning of the children’s narrative of evacuation and stayed with many of them well into their adult lives. As evacuees arrived at Canadian ports throughout July, August, and September 1940, Canada took up her role as protector

¹ “Value of Evacuating Children from England is Stressed”, *Halifax Chronicle*, August 28, 1940.

and Canadians became foster parents to Britain's children. Yet, in collaboration with CORB, the Canadian government and Canadian private organisations were able to select subjectively those it determined to be fit for evacuation.

Domestic evacuation was an unprecedented movement of people within Britain. Never before had so many people relocated within Britain. Overseas evacuation was similarly an unprecedented movement of children away from Britain. Child-saving movements in the latter half of the nineteenth century saw charitable and religious organisations facilitate the shipment of children to Canada to give them a better chance at life. These children were often orphans, paupers, and "street urchins". The *Canadian Immigration Act of 1869* prohibited entry to convicted criminals, paupers, and individuals without prospects for a livelihood.² Children were the exception. Much of Canada had labour shortages, particularly for farming and domestic servants, even up to the First World War.³ Shurlee Swain and Marot Hillel highlight that, according to child rescuers, the removal of children would make them useful to the empire and the rhetoric of a "young Canada" in need of the British race meant that such emigration would "help" the empire.⁴ Between 1882 and 1915, Dr. Barnardo's organisation alone had sent 24,854 children to Canada.⁵ Despite Canadian offers to take tens of thousands of British children, evacuation would be nowhere near the overall scale of the child rescue movement.⁶ However, evacuation was unprecedented in its wartime impetus for the movement and differed greatly from such child-saving movements. Children would not consist of paupers, would not become labourers, and the British and Canadian governments would go to great lengths to care for, protect, and monitor them during their time in Canada. Instead of acting as a silent recipient, Canada offered to care temporarily

² Parker, *Uprooted*, 2008. The movement was the product of the evangelical revival of the 1850s.

³ See Roy Parker, Chapter 8 "Canadian Demand for Child Labour" in *Uprooted* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2008): 129-150.

⁴ See Shurlee Swain and Marot Hillel in *Child, Nation, Race and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010). Child rescuers used the salvation of the race and the empire to justify their actions.

⁵ See Parker, Chapter 5 "The Second Wave of Organised Protestant Child Emigration" in *Uprooted* (2008): 67-90.

⁶ Using Barnardo's number alone means that averaged over thirty-three years, 753 per year arrived in Canada with the organisation's assistance. Evacuation, in a much shorter span of time would see almost that number arriving per month in the summer of 1940.

for Britain's children. Furthermore, overseas evacuation was a unique movement that in some ways fundamentally differed from domestic evacuation in terms of planning, execution, wartime experiences, and impacts. Yet the historiography overlooks the concentrated planning that shaped evacuation and the intensive process that brought the children from their homes in Britain to new foster homes in Canada. In doing so, Canada's role as recipient is muted. The existing literature, particularly Bilson's work, also discusses the children's journey using only adult-created sources instead of child-created sources that illuminate the children's perceptions of their evacuation journey.

CORB was established in response to a public call for an evacuation scheme that would not privilege the wealthy who could pay for their own children's transportation. Rather than a government policy thought up to intervene in the lives of civilians by taking their children away from them, British parents wanted the option to send their children to safety overseas for the war. Once the British and Canadian governments had come to an agreement on such a proposed scheme, British parents had to decide whether they would pursue overseas evacuation for their children. In theory, British parents could keep their children at home with them, a seemingly risky option if residing in an "evacuated area" deemed dangerous, evacuate them to the countryside, or decide to send them overseas. For some, keeping children at home may not have been a viable option as men went off to war or women took up war work or voluntary service activities which would leave their children unattended. Many schools in evacuated areas had closed which also left children unsupervised.⁷ Some mothers, after saying goodbye to their husbands, were hesitant to send their children to another country and leave themselves as the only members of their family in Britain. These factors faced mothers who decided to evacuate their children domestically, yet overseas evacuation brought added concerns. Mothers of domestic evacuees could, in theory, bring their children home if they changed their minds; overseas evacuation by nature prevented such "recall". This meant that if parents decided on overseas evacuation, they would truly part with their children for an unknown

⁷ Hussey, Stephen. "The School Air-Raid Shelter: Rethinking Wartime Pedagogies." *History of Education Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (2003): 517-539. Emma Lautman, "'The First Casualty of War?': Education and schooling in Britain during WWII" (Unpublished MA diss., University of Nottingham, 2012).

period. Parents of domestic evacuees were, in theory, able to visit their children in the countryside although due to petrol rationing and war work, this was not as frequent as some may expect.⁸ Even if parents or mothers were able visit their children only once, this would have been a major difference from overseas evacuation. Except for nominated children, parents would have to surrender total control of deciding with whom and where their children lived. Domestic evacuee parents similarly did not have this luxury but if their child complained of a poor billet then, due to proximity, the parent was more easily able to request a change.⁹ Perhaps the greatest difference for parents choosing between domestic and overseas evacuation was that parents of potential overseas evacuees had to agree to send their children into dangerous seas that were infested with U-boats and carried a high risk of being torpedoed.

While the decision-making process was multifaceted, some individuals argued that class would play a significant role. In reference to domestic evacuation, Lord Strabolgi had raised in the House of Lords his view that working-class mothers had been reluctant to part with their children. He argued that this was because “working-class families, where nurses and governesses are not employed, where the habit of sending children to boarding schools is not followed, families are much closer together and mothers especially want to keep their children with them in this time of danger”.¹⁰ By extension, Lord Strabolgi suggested that middle- and upper-class families would be more willing to evacuate their children because of the legacy of sending their children to boarding school. If a family tradition saw children sent to boarding school at age eight or even eleven, sending the children overseas to Canada would really be of little difference, even if the time came a year or two early. In those instances, long-term separation between parent and child was simply a part of childhood.¹¹ Sheila Westcott’s father was an air raid warden and her mother was in the Women’s Voluntary Service. As she was

⁸ See Martin Parsons, *The Evacuation*.

⁹ The circumstances sometimes arose that evacuee parents would journey to see their children and find their children unhappy or “suffering” or the billet not up to their standard and would request a new billet or would simply take the children home with them.

¹⁰ Britain. *House of Lords*, Hansard, June 26, 1940, 5th series, vol 116.

¹¹ John Wolfenden, *The Public Schools To-day: A Study in Boarding School Education* (London: University of London Press, 1948).

expected to go to boarding school at age eleven, her parents felt it appropriate to send her to Canada.¹² Regardless of class, all parents had to come to a decision, as evacuation was strictly optional.

Newspapers such as the *Times* ensured that parents were aware of the non-obligatory nature of evacuation as one article noted “parents and guardians will be free to say whether their children shall travel or not; there will be no compulsion”. On making the choice, the article argued, “it is realized that the decision would not be easy for any parent, and that most people would hesitate for long before agreeing that their children should journey so far away”. “At the same time”, the article continued, “many would probably feel that a temporary parting would be a small price to pay for escape for their children from the sort of ruthless bombing which Poland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France have all experienced”.¹³ To further help parents make the decision, some newspapers printed articles suggesting what pleasant experiences lay ahead for the children in Canada. The *Manchester Guardian* on June 21, 1940 ran “Children Who Go to Canada” which argued that a “warm welcome” was assured. Writing with authority as a family member of a girl who went as part of a school group to tour Canada in August 1939 and stayed, C.J. Gregory wrote that his relative was initially shy “amongst people who were total strangers but who exhibited a cordiality and openness of mind which were so different to conservative English ways”.¹⁴ She soon adapted herself to the Canadian way of life; her letters home apparently showed a breadth of outlook and an educational development that Gregory argued could have come by no other way. Gregory concluded:

I am happy to pay tribute to the splendid hospitality of the people of Canada. For the children to be living in safety free from the necessity to carry gas masks or the constant risk of listening to air-raid alarms and, at the same time, to be receiving education in the widest sense of the word is well worth the pain which parent and child must suffer through separation.¹⁵

¹² IWM, Document 1750, “Private Papers S. H. Cooley”.

¹³ “Sending Children to Dominions”, *Times*, June 1, 1940.

¹⁴ “Children Who Go to Canada”, *Manchester Guardian*, June 21, 1940.

¹⁵ “Children Who Go to Canada”, *Manchester Guardian*, June 21, 1940.

The *Ilford Recorder* told parents that they ought not to be concerned about Canada's "severe weather" because of the country's vastness and because Canadians would be "well equipped with clothes and knowledge to deal with it".¹⁶ Houses in Canada, the article advocated, were more modern and comfortable than English homes and even had central heating, electricity and "everyone's on the telephone!"¹⁷ The *Manchester Guardian* article "Away From it All" argued that not only would children receive constant education but that evacuation would, from a national viewpoint, ensure the safety and future of new generations.¹⁸ Not only was Canada a safe haven from bombs and invasion but the country was cast as welcoming, hospitable, and comfortable, and the land of educational opportunity.

That CORB received 201,168 applications from parents wanting to send their children overseas to the Dominions illustrates that many parents across Britain were willing to take the risk the dangerous ocean travel.¹⁹ The parents of the 253 children who arrived in Canada privately in 1939 had similarly decided it the best option. Deliberation would have been a similar experience for the parents of both CORB evacuees and private evacuees. Although the increased anxiety after the Fall of France is considered the major impetus behind overseas evacuation, there were often additional factors influencing parents' decisions. The parents of Patricia and Colin Cave from Bristol decided to send them privately to Canada not only because of the risk of bombs but because their father had been gassed in the First World War; he questioned what else the Germans were capable of. Expecting an invasion of Britain next, he thought the only option was to place his children beyond the German grasp.²⁰ The father of Philomena Guilleband, as an economics faculty member at Cambridge University, had published a book on the "economic recovery of Germany, 1933-1938" just before the outbreak of war. Not only

¹⁶ Gladys Williams, "What Children Will Find in Canada", *Ilford Recorder*.

¹⁷ This last point was certainly untrue as not every house in Canada had a telephone. For a history of Canada telephony see Michele Martin, *Hello Central?: Gender, Technology, and Culture in the Formation of Telephone Systems* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991).

¹⁸ "Away From It All", *Manchester Guardian*, June 13, 1940.

¹⁹ TNA, DO 131/27, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Statistics of Children Leaving the UK".

²⁰ IWM, Document 10034, "Private Papers of Patricia Cave".

did the book receive poor reviews but her father became fearful of German policy and an invasion. Philomena's Austrian-born mother worried that Philomena and her siblings as half-English, half-Austrian would "be pariahs in event of a German invasion" and wanted them out of the country.²¹ Elizabeth Platts' family were Quakers. They decided to send Elizabeth away when rumours circulated that "Hitler wanted to use Quaker children as breeding stock for his Aryans".²² The fear of such a heinous act was enough to implore Elizabeth's parents to send her to Canada.

For some families, the chance at a private group evacuation was snatched up. When war broke out, Dennis Drew's stepfather was working at the Ford Motor Company in Dagenham but later joined the RAF. Dennis and his sister Jean were evacuated to Sussex where they became miserable living with a very religious couple. When their mother visited she was alarmed by their thin bodies so packed them up and took them home with her. When the Ford Motor Company announced a private evacuation scheme for children of Ford employees in England, Dennis, aged eight, and Jean, ten, were signed up.²³ Bad experiences with domestic evacuation often made Canada seem like a better option. With very different motivations, the parents of Christine and Archibald Bolus registered the children with CORB. Christine was always charged with looking after the mischievous Archie but this became troublesome once air raids began hitting Glasgow. During air raids, Christine was sent out to look for Archie who often made a game of running away from his sister. On one occasion, according to Christine, the streets were empty and by the time she caught up to him the German bombers were overhead; when they got home their mother was in hysterics and decided they should no longer stay. Evacuation provided a way to protect children while giving parents peace of mind.²⁴

²¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Fabian Pease".

²² Author's Evacuee Collection, "Elizabeth Platts".

²³ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Dennis Drew".

²⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Christine Bolus". Bolus also wrote how she wanted to go to the United States because she wanted to be Jean Harlow and a star in Hollywood movies. It was her father and her teacher who talked her into going to Canada.

In some instances, the decision was not solely left up to the parents. Teachers often played a role too. One teacher from Burwash Weald, Sussex wrote to Mass Observation, “I chat to the children about Canada etc with the Overseas Scheme in mind”.²⁵ John Hughes, rather than his parents, was the one to consider evacuation initially. His teacher at Victoria Jubilee School had told her students about CORB and showed them tourism posters of the Dominions. The poster with a Mountie on a black horse in a wheat field with the Rockies behind captured John’s interest and was the reason he took a CORB application form home.²⁶ A librarian in Fulham even wrote to Mass Observation that she had “a spontaneous demand for books on the Empire, Canada and Australia” from children who thought they were going to be evacuated overseas.²⁷ “One weekend in June 1940, Bill Shaw and his youngest sister Kathleen were called home from boarding school. After lunch, their father asked if they wanted to go to Canada. Their parents’ friend had offered to care for Bill and Kathleen. The two were then left alone in the dining room to discuss the prospect. Kathleen, aged fifteen, and Bill, aged twelve, decided their fate and their “great Canadian adventure began”.²⁸ Some children were even consulted and given a say as to whether or not they would go to Canada, a great display of parental respect for their children’s autonomy. Whoever helped to make the decision, with so much uncertainty ahead, it must have been made with a heavy heart. Parents who eventually sent their children to Canada decided that Britain was no longer safe for their children.

Once parents decided upon evacuation, both private and CORB evacuees had to go through a selection process. During the planning of CORB, a provision was made that all children would have to go through an application process. This was unlike the domestic evacuation scheme whereby children would register rather than apply and were not rejected. For parents who wished to evacuate their children through the government

²⁵ MO, Diarist 5376-238-254. The teacher further wrote “I wish they could go both to escape possible invasion horrors & food shortages & even more perhaps to have the chance of seeing the world, or going on a ship – chance which most of them will never have the cash for nor wish for & which I have enjoyed so tremendously”. Evacuation was an opportunity for protection but also for adventure.

²⁶ Canadian Museum of Immigration (CMI), British Evacuee Child Collection, “John Hughes”.

²⁷ MO, Topic Collection 5-3-F, Evacuation 1939-1944, “Children’s Reading Survey, Fulham 1940-1941.

²⁸ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Bill Shaw”.

scheme, submitting a formal application to CORB was the first step. The application was not only a practical method of organisation but it decided who was deemed acceptable for evacuation. Although parents could still change their minds, the application requested that parents not send their children's names unless there was a "reasonable chance" that they would want to send them overseas.²⁹ The application notified parents that submitting an application was "in no way a binding undertaking" but meant that their children would have a better chance of being sent sooner rather than later. The application made it very clear that in terms of selection "CORB will have the final right to decide whether any child is suitable for reception overseas, and there can be no appeal from its decision". The application asked for the children's names, age, sex, place and date of birth, and home address (or evacuated area). Parents also had to confirm whether the children attended school and provide their children's religion.³⁰ Although Canada seemed willing to accept a small number of Jewish children, South Africa refused to offer homes to any Jewish British children.³¹ As a way to filter out unwanted European children, the application asked "are they British"? The application, however, also permitted parents to have some say in where their children would be evacuated to if accepted by CORB. Parents could "nominate" a friend or relative to whom they wished for their children to go and could state their preference in Dominion.³² From the total 201,168 applications, 84,523, the clear majority of parents signaled their preference in destination as they noted, "Canada Please!"³³ As Canada was the closest Dominion, and had the closest ties to Britain in the pre-war period, this is unsurprising. Additionally, South Africa held the legacy of the South African War whilst Australia was remembered as former recipient of Britain's convicts. One individual wrote to Mass Observation refusing to evacuate their children to

²⁹ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

³⁰ Ibid. MO, Topic Collection 5-3-F, Evacuation 1939-1944, "Selected Forms and Official Material", "Attitude to sending children overseas", June 14-20, 1940. Religion was marked with a line rather than any sort of box to check. This suggested that CORB recognised the different religious denominations that could apply. At very least, there was not a list that excluded Jewish children.

³¹ Starns, *Oceans Apart*, 34-35. Australia was only willing to have 10 percent of the children be Jewish. There was also a colour ban. TNA, DO 131/3, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "CORB Advisory Council".

³² A written offer from the potential foster parents had to be included with the application.

³³ TNA, ED 136/126, Department of Education and Science, "Overseas Evacuation".

Australia, noting that they would “rather be bombed than have children grow up like our relations there, scatter-brained and demoralised”.³⁴

After sorting through each application, CORB individually notified parents whether or not their child/ren were “suitable for being sent under the scheme” subject to a satisfactory school report and a medical exam. To complete the registration process, both parents, unless the father was overseas, had to sign the application which then established a contract between the parents and CORB stating that the child would be accepted under the scheme with a series of conditions. The first stipulated that consent to remove the child must be given by persons having authority to give it. This ensured that claims of forced government intervention or claims that the government took a child against parental wishes would be void. The next point described the responsibility of the United Kingdom government to secure transport, care, maintenance and education for the child, and return of the child to Britain. However, this point was then qualified as it noted that the government would not be “responsible or liable for any injury including fatal injury or damage which may be suffered by the child”.³⁵ This absolved the carrier providing the means of transport of the child of any liability. The last significant point stated that the parents or guardians had to pay a weekly sum to the British government for maintenance. Signing this form meant that British parents agreed to regulations for the standard of care by CORB and Canadian authorities. Further complicating the process was the fact that many of the children had already been evacuated and were no longer with their parents. For instance, Donald Chandler was evacuated to Suffolk, England in the first wave of evacuation on September 1, 1939 and remained there until the evacuation of Dunkirk when his parents applied to CORB.³⁶ CORB applications became decentralised and parents were referred to individual Local Education Authorities who had been sent the necessary application forms.³⁷

³⁴ MO, Topic Collection 5-3-F, Evacuation 1939-1944, “Attitude to sending children overseas”, June 14-20, 1940.

³⁵ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

³⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Donald Stephen Chandler”.

³⁷ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

Both Canadian and British authorities used the information included within the application to select and reject CORB children. Along with personal and familial information, the application form also had to include a school report and their teacher's recommendations "on the suitability of the child for overseas evacuation". Even from CORB records, it is unclear how this suitability was defined and therefore was likely left to the teacher's discretion. The children had to pass a medical exam conducted by the school medical officer. If the child was certified free of conditions like skin disease or tuberculosis, parents signed and returned the completed application to CORB's Selection Division.³⁸ Once the applications arrived at the CORB Selection Division they were then sorted into A and B categories: A for children from grant-aided schools and B for children from non-grant aided schools, to enable a proportional distribution. Preference was given to children whose homes were in evacuated areas. Suitability was also defined by representatives from Canada; once applications were processed through CORB, they were inspected by Dominion Liaison Officers. CORB files, however, are unclear in regards to how Dominion authorities inspected the applications. It is unclear if Dominion authorities made selections based on religion in order to satisfy the Canadian provincial recommendations but Canadian authorities made the last judgement. If the application passed the Dominion inspection, parents were notified of the acceptance that was conditional on any further medical examinations being passed satisfactorily.³⁹ By December 1940, of the 201,168 applicants, 14,122 children had been approved by CORB. This suggests that 187,046 children were rejected by CORB or had parents who ultimately decided to not pursue overseas evacuation. Of the 14, 122 approved for evacuation, 8,740 had been approved for Canada.⁴⁰ Once accepted, children were placed on a waiting list for when shipping became available. Parents were then left to wait for notification of their children's sailing. While they waited, CORB implored parents to "regard this information as confidential" in the interest of the safety of their children and of those who would go with them. The letter forcefully advised, "You should not discuss

³⁸ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ TNA, DO 131/27, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Statistics of Children Leaving the UK".

that matter even with your neighbours, and you should ask your child (children) also not to talk about it".⁴¹ Not being able to be trusted with such top-secret information is likely the reason why some parents did not tell their children of their evacuation until the day of their departure.

Parents applying to CORB had a multi-step selection process to go through while private evacuees were not subject to the same rigorous process. Although they would still have to pass a general immigration medical exam prior to departure, private evacuees were able to leave for Canada so long as they could cover the £15 transportation fee and obtain a passport. The only restriction in such agreements for private evacuation was that a statement or promise to provide care by the individual was supposed to accompany the private evacuee. Once fulfilled, the child had to receive an exit permit and then could apply for a spot on a ship.⁴² While the door to European refugees closed, the door to Canada was wide open for British children. For potential private evacuees, unlike CORB evacuees, being selected for evacuation was less of a problem than securing offers by individuals in Canada. British parents could pursue three avenues to find a suitable home in Canada for their children. Firstly they could inquire with family, even distant family members, friends, or other personal connections such as professional relationships to see if anyone would be willing to take their child. If they had no personal connections in Canada, the parents could then try to establish or inquire about a school-wide evacuation scheme at private schools. Another option would be to send their child privately through private organisations such as religious and philanthropic groups.

As the war took a turn for the worse for Britain in the summer of 1940, many Canadians wrote to distant friends and family in Britain to offer to take their children. Lois Davidson's father, for instance, had immigrated to Canada in 1932, leaving behind his family. In 1940, Lois' father wrote to his sibling to offer to care for Lois' ten-year-old

⁴¹ Such acceptance letters only remain in former evacuees' collections. Private Papers of Patricia Johnson, cited in Parsons and Starns, *The Evacuation: The True Story* (Peterborough: DSM, 1999): 131.

⁴² Initially all private evacuees, despite not being under the scheme's responsibility, had to file their names with CORB, but this was later rescinded.

cousin, Vincent Holman.⁴³ Such offers mirrored those publicly declared in Canadian newspapers. In some instances, it was British parents who took initiative and drew on some personal connections. On June 15, 1940, Rex Cave cabled Peggy Fawcett in Toronto: “Can you take in or arrange for Paddy and Colin if sent must arrange payment later present regulations prohibit remission of funds”. Fawcett replied shortly after “Have promised take Arthur Fawcett’s boy have friend here who will willingly take both Colin and Paddy”.⁴⁴ The Fawcetts were already doing their part by offering their home to a relative. Sometimes it was through transnational personal connections and word of mouth that private evacuees were sent to the homes of friends of friends. Some British parents found making such a request of distant family members or friends difficult, especially as foster parents would have to care for the children entirely out of pocket for the course of the war. Once offers were made and accepted, often numerous transnational communications were required to sort out arrangements. Mrs. Hall in Deleau, Manitoba, and the mother of five-year-old Patricia Silver needed quite a few letters to fully organise Patricia’s evacuation. Soon-to-be foster parents also used these letters to proclaim the standard of care they would provide for the evacuees and reaffirm their dedication. Mrs. Hall for instance wrote “I can assure you, that as soon as we meet her, we will do all in our power for her happiness, comfort and education while she is with us, and as for remuneration, you can just forget all maintenance while she is with us”.⁴⁵

Some private schools, either at the request of a parent, at the impulse of a headmaster/headmistress, or an offer from a Canadian school, made arrangements to privately evacuate some of their students to Canada. On June 25, 1940 the Master of Wellington College wrote to M.G. Holmes at the Department of Education explaining that he had received a number of requests from parents asking about the possibility of the

⁴³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Lois Davidson”.

⁴⁴ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Patricia Cave”.

⁴⁵ IWM, Documents 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”. Veronica Strong-Boag has studied the history of fostering in Canada and points out that foster homes act as “substitute households for disadvantaged children”. While this is true, evacuees presented a different context as these British children were very much wanted and were not disadvantaged. Veronica Strong-Boag, *Fostering Nation?* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011), 3.

school moving to Canada.⁴⁶ A number of parents, particularly of junior boys, were going to send their children over anyway if they could get a passage. Due to government regulations, finances were the main obstacle. The Headmaster suggested that as his brother had married into the Molson family, Mr. Molson who was in real estate would likely help find a location for the school to open in Canada. In his reply, Holmes explained that the protocol for schools required that the British school contact a school in Canada “of a similar status to your own” and arrange for them to receive students. To prevent a school from being stranded without any money or support, all schools leaving Britain had to be linked to a school in Canada. The Canadian institution even had to be proven to be a “genuine educational establishment” to the British Board of Education. A secondary condition was that there could be no arrangement or promise for remittances of school funds during the war. Once these points were settled, the British school then had to apply to the Dominions Office that would then request consent from the Canadian Government for the transfer of the school. Wellington College was not the only school thinking about transferring to Canada. On June 27, 1940 there was a Headmasters’ Conference held at the Dominions Office to discuss such transfers of British schools, particularly to Canada.⁴⁷ In attendance were Lester B. Pearson from the Office of the High Commissioner for Canada and representatives from the Treasury, the Board of Education, CORB, and the Dominions Office. As well as restating the regulations for schools, the conference added that children would be treated as part of the school and would receive a group exit permit rather than an individual pass. If travelling as a school group, the conference outlined that each child must be between the ages of five and sixteen. Like CORB, anyone under the age of five was deemed too young for evacuation. Schools units had to consist of more than ten children and would have to be accompanied by an adult representing the school. Moreover, Canadian schools were able to request a recommendation from the board in order to establish whether the school was not only a

⁴⁶ TNA, ED 136/126, Department of Education and Science, “Overseas Evacuation”.

⁴⁷ Ibid. This is important because the meeting discussed options for transporting schools to Canada rather than any of the other Dominions.

“Recognised School” but was in financial good standing.⁴⁸ This was a way to protect Canadian schools from becoming stuck with unwanted pupils. Even for private evacuees, Canadian authorities played a role in establishing the guidelines for group evacuation.

Despite the logistics necessary to organise a school for evacuation, many Canadian private schools were willing to extend a hand of friendship to British schools. Canadian schools such as the all-boys St. Andrew’s College in Aurora and Bishop Strachan School for Girls in Toronto had made offers to accept British schools in January 1940; the Fall of France again reinvigorated interest and offers of private evacuation.⁴⁹ On July 2, 1940 Riverbend Girls School pledged its suitability for day and boarding students while a Montessori school in Calgary telegraphed to say it could accommodate twenty-five resident boys and girls. A few days prior, St. John’s College School in Winnipeg asked whether it could be of any assistance in the education of boys temporarily in Canada. Major Frederick J. Ney, Executive Vice-President of the National Council of Education of Canada, took great interest in such offers due to his extensive experience in facilitating teacher and student exchanges between Britain and Canada in the pre-war years. In some instances, Ney inquired personally with individual Canadian schools, for instance asking if Edgehill in Windsor, Nova Scotia, would be willing to undertake hospitality for approximate fifty girls from Roedean.⁵⁰

In other instances, individuals who had no affiliation to any Canadian school wrote to Ney to offer what they thought could be useful for British schools. Reverend R. S. Mason from Richmond Hill, Ontario, wrote to the Secretary of Canada House in London to offer his property to any school wanting to re-establish itself in Canada.⁵¹ His

⁴⁸ TNA, ED 136/126, Department of Education and Science, “Overseas Evacuation”. On the whole, schools had to make arrangements themselves.

⁴⁹ LAC, MG30-D245, “Frederick James Ney Fonds”.

⁵⁰ Ibid. He also had a group of girls from Roedean who came to Canada on tour just before war broke out (the case which was referenced in the Times letter to the editor article about warm welcomes). Some girls returned to Britain whilst others remained in Canada at private schools.

⁵¹ No evidence that this offer was taken up can be found. It is seemingly unlikely that a school group would have transferred to the home due to the regulations that stated school groups would have to be matched with Canadian schools.

description of his property illustrates his perception of what may be suitable for evacuees as he wrote:

I have a fine country home, situated on a paved highway, nine miles North of Toronto, which would suit a small school. The house has twelve rooms on two floors, five rooms in the basement, and the top floor could be furnished to make still more rooms. Central heating, hot water and hot air – ample water supply, all conveniences.⁵²

Others broadly perceived Canada as a suitable place for British schools. In a letter to the editor of the *Times*, Stephanie Langdon argued that British schools should seize the chance to send their children to Canada. The suitability of the country lay in that “parts of the east coast of Canada, and Vancouver City, and Vancouver Island”, Langdon wrote, “have ideal climates for English children”. “The really important things in life – outdoor occupations and pleasures- are more easily come by”, Langdon explained.⁵³ Whether it was the British school that sought out a Canadian ally or the Canadian school that first offered its services, once a mutual connection was made, parents of children at the British school could express their wish for overseas evacuation. Much like CORB evacuees, the children, as a school unit, would then have to wait for news of their departure.

Organisations that facilitated the evacuation of private groups retained authority to decide to which children they wanted to extend their offers. Like schools, however, official paperwork was required. Either block permits were granted or children required passports and exit permits as well as adults to escort them. The Women’s War Service Committee at the University of Toronto set out to organise the evacuation of children of British faculty members at Manchester, Birmingham, Cambridge, and Oxford universities in June 1940.⁵⁴ The committee, for instance, offered to take fifty or sixty children from Oxford University homes. These offers were therefore specific to university children who

⁵² MG30-D245, “Frederick James Ney Fonds”.

⁵³ “Letters to the Editor”, *Times*, June 15, 1940.

⁵⁴ The committee was in contact with Major Ney and Mr. Blair at the Immigration Department. The University of Toronto also helped to facilitated the movement of children from these universities to homes of faculty members at Yale and Harvard. By July 9 1940, parents wishing to send their children overseas privately no longer needed to obtain permission to do so from CORB. TNA, DO 131/08, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Offer from University of Toronto”.

were perceived to be of appropriate status for Toronto homes. Jewish children however were deemed undesirable as the committee's minutes recorded that "the Medical Faculty offering homes are not willing to accept Jewish children even if of British faculty parents".⁵⁵ Companies like Kodak, the Ford Motor Company, and the English Electric Company were similarly able to select only children of their British counterparts.⁵⁶ Wallace Campbell, President of Ford Canada, offered to take approximately one hundred children of Ford employees. After discussions, employees at Ford in Britain began compiling a list of children whose parents wanted them to go. Catherine Anderson was registered with the Ford scheme but by obscure means. It seemed that Ford had two unfilled spaces remaining in its group so offered the spots to the employees of Ford suppliers. As Catherine Anderson's father worked at a flour mill that supplied Ford, she was officially accepted into the group. This acceptance did not mean that she was socially included in the Ford group; Catherine and the other Ford-affiliated girl were excluded from photographs taken of the Ford children, particularly on board the ship.⁵⁷ Although such groups were driven by humanitarian and philanthropic motivations, by virtue of the circumstances of evacuation, the groups were able to decide to whom they would extend their offers and whom they would exclude.

Being accepted into the CORB scheme or a private school group or organisation did not necessarily mean that the children would actually depart for Canada. Both private and CORB evacuees had to pass a final medical exam, often at the port of disembarkation, conducted by Canadian authorities. Private evacuees, as previously mentioned, would be required to pass a standard test for immigrants wanting to go to Canada. The medical exam for CORB evacuees just prior to their departure, however, was even more subjective. Preliminary medical tests were conducted by local doctors so it was possible

⁵⁵ UOTA, B1968-0002, "University of Toronto, Women's War Service Committee".

⁵⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Audrey Scholes nee Buxton". Audrey Buxton went with her sister to Canada with the English Electric Company

⁵⁷ Author's Evacuee Database, "Catherine Anderson". On an extreme level, the Canadian Eugenics Society established in 1931, managed to bring eighty-four "eugenically important children" to Canada before the Canadian government imposed restrictions preventing the society from "doing its work". "Canadian Eugenics Society Being Launched Tonight", *Globe and Mail*, January 9, 1931. By 1942, the British Eugenics Society noted that the Eugenics Society of Canada had ceased to exist. It far too closely mirrored Nazi ideals of social eugenics. Starns, *Oceans Apart*, 40.

that doctors who knew families personally could purposely have permitted some medical conditions to go unnoted. Because it had been agreed that no evacuee should be rejected upon arrival in the Dominion, Dominion doctors were put in charge of final medical exams.⁵⁸ The final examination would eliminate infectious diseases but would also make note of the cost of any special medical assistance required (spectacles for example) and the cost needing to be charged on war appropriations.⁵⁹ Dominion doctors had the authority to make judgements and reject children on medical and “civil” grounds.⁶⁰ H.B. Jeffs, a Canadian medical officer in England, reviewed 26,864 medical files and rejected approximately eight percent.⁶¹ Behaviour problems were factored into evacuees’ “civil” suitability.⁶² After all, evacuees would ultimately act as symbols of the health of Britain and therefore could not portray any moral, physical, or emotional decay. Records of these particular examinations unfortunately no longer exist.⁶³ A memorandum from August 30, 1940 forwarded to the Canadian Immigration Branch from two doctors who conducted these examinations has survived and provides unprecedented insight of this process. In the memo, the doctors describe their trip to Liverpool to examine 419 CORB children waiting to sail. Of the 419 children, 331 or 79 percent, were approved. There were fourteen children who were rejected (3 percent) while seventy-four (18 percent) simply did not appear for the examination, suggesting that some had changed their minds. Even though those fourteen children had already been through a medical test, the Canadian doctors considered them unsuitable. As a result of the exam, Marguerite Norton was taken to hospital (presumably her test showed something that needed further medical attention), while Hannah McGuinness was rejected upon discovery that she had

⁵⁸ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

⁵⁹ LAC, MG20-E256, “Charlotte Whitton Fonds.”

⁶⁰ “Civil” was the terminology employed in CORB records. Mona Gleason in “Lost Voices, Lost Bodies?” (page 149) argues that “children’s bodies over the first half of the twentieth century were conceptualized as vulnerable and susceptible to serious medical problems”. Much the same, Canadian and British CORB and medical authorities imposed their perceptions of “good health” onto potential evacuees and used the children’s bodies as a space to decide their worthiness and suitability.

⁶¹ LAC, RG76-I-A-1, Immigration Branch, Vol 542, File 693248. Also quoted in Bilson, *The Guest Children*, 103. Bilson also notes that Jeffs’ number of rejections would have been higher if he had also rejected children with bad teeth because, outraged that British dentists would extract children’s teeth, he believed they could receive better dental care in Canada.

⁶² TNA, DO 35/713, Dominions Office, “Evacuation to the Dominions”.

⁶³ There is no record in CORB, British or Canadians files.

Osteomyelitis, an infection in a bone. Mary Cosgrove was diagnosed and rejected for chronic bronchitis and Betty Butter, who somehow still attended the exam despite being previously rejected, was rejected due to infantile paralysis.⁶⁴

Dominion doctors also used examinations to sort out unsuitable children based on civil or social grounds. Ernest Walker was rejected because he was described as: “poor type, unpleasant looking individual with dirty odour”. According to Dominion authorities this meant he “would be a problem to place”. Harold Wilton Sidebottom was classified as “poor type, tiny child, bad habits, grimace, appears stupid”. The doctors also included an unusual case of a boy who despite his name not actually appearing on the nomination roll, showed up at the test and was nevertheless submitted for the medical examination. Twelve-year-old Peter Hills from Glasgow stated that he was supposed to go to a Mrs. MacIntyre in Toronto. For an unexplained reason, the doctor asked the boy if he had ever been in the hands of the police and after some hesitation, Peter explained that he had been caught in an orchard and on another occasion had been caught stealing potatoes but was never charged nor brought to court. The doctor noted that there may have been other incidents undisclosed to him and therefore he decided the boy unsuitable for evacuation and rejected him.⁶⁵ Cases such as Peter Hills’ would have been classified as civil rejections, in Peter’s case because of his perceived propensity for delinquency.⁶⁶ The doctors also noted that on August 28 and 29 they went to Edinburgh to review files, examining 1,225 of which they rejected 150 on medical grounds (12 percent) and ninety-

⁶⁴ LAC, RG76-I-A-1, Immigration Branch, Vol 438 & 439, File 661315. This is not to suggest that British doctors missed all of these conditions as some medical issues may have simply developed in the time since their initial exam and application.

⁶⁵ Ibid. It seemed as though the doctor had been forewarned about the boy’s past.

⁶⁶ Delinquency is a social construct but for both Britain and Canada, delinquents, or for that matter, those who should be rejected from evacuation, were degenerate, dirty, immoral, and perceived to be thieves. In Canada, the 1929 *Juvenile Delinquency Act* set the standard for who would not be suitable. For a British context, See Andrew Davies, “Youth Gangs, Masculinity and Violence in Late Victorian Manchester and Salford”, *Journal of Social History* 32, no.2 (1998): 349-369. For perceptions and fears over juvenile delinquency in Canada see Joan Sangster, *Girl Trouble* (Toronto: Behind the Lines Press, 2002), Christabelle Sethna, “Wait Till Your Father Gets Home” in *Papers in Post-Confederation Family History*, edited by Lori Chambers and Edgar Montigny (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 1998), Cynthia Comacchio, “Lost in Modernity” in *Lost Children* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010) and Jeffrey Keshen, “Wartime Jitters over Juveniles” in *Age of Contention*, edited by Jeffrey Keshen, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1997).

one on civil grounds (7 percent).⁶⁷ This level of rejection was much higher than in Liverpool.⁶⁸ Dominion doctors were therefore able to reject medically unfit and “undesirable children”.⁶⁹ Overall, an estimated 11 percent of children who passed the initial CORB medical exam conducted by British doctors were ultimately rejected by Dominion doctors.⁷⁰ These medical exams in effect sometimes separated siblings. John Potter, for instance, had been a poorly child, unlike his elder brother Brian. Much to their parents’ surprise, when the Potter boys received the final medical test it was John who was accepted. Brian was rejected on the grounds that it was thought that he would fret too much if sent away and therefore was not suitable for evacuation.⁷¹ John left his brother Brian behind in Britain. Because there was always a number of children rejected at the final stage, a small group of “marginal” children were also brought to the examination to account for the “margin of wastage” caused by those who were rejected. Any “marginal” children who were not called upon that day were then placed on a list for the next boat.⁷² According to Geoffrey Shakespeare, the blow to parents who were shocked by having their children rejected was “softened as far as it could be by an appropriate letter”.⁷³

After all final formalities CORB children were sorted into “balanced” parties in accordance with guidance from the Transport Department for available space on the next ship embarking for Canada. Children were selected based on geographical location and the degree to which their area was vulnerable to attack from the air. Spots for Scottish children were kept so as to ensure their inclusion, although it proved impossible to include Scottish children in each party. To remedy this, two ships with eighty-nine children each and one carrying forty-five children were reserved for Scottish children

⁶⁷ LAC, RG76-I-A-1, Immigration Branch, Vol 438 & 439, File 661315.

⁶⁸ This could suggest that the childhood standard of health in Edinburgh was lower than in England or could point towards more relaxed initial CORB acceptances of Scottish children.

⁶⁹ There is no evidence that children were rejected at this stage because of their religious demonination.

⁷⁰ This number is supplied by Penny Starns although she provides no citation as evidence. Furthermore, the number likely refers to *all* CORB children rather than just those headed for Canada. Starns, *Oceans Apart*, 35.

⁷¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Gwen Potter”.

⁷² TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

⁷³ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Speeches and General Surveys”. Shakespeare made the speech at the Victoria League annual meeting on July 15, 1941.

going to Canada. Children from grant-aided (state schools) formed the largest proportion of children accepted into CORB. Children were also selected for departure based on whether they were from grant-aided (category A) or from non-aided, private schools (category B). On each ship, CORB felt it important to send a proportion of B children that was equal to the ratio of children attending private schools in England and Wales or Scotland to prevent children from private, non-grant aided schools forming the majority of places or having more grant-aided children out of the country rather than in, which could lead to fresh debates over the extent to which evacuation was simply for the wealthy. Each ship party had also to be divided by gender and ages to ensure a balanced proportion as well as the agreed ratio of Roman Catholics and Protestants. The children's names were then placed on a nominal roll and this acted as their passport and exit permit, the only paperwork necessary for their journey. The nominal rolls were not only valid documents for the British and Canadian governments but they became a valuable historical record of evacuation.⁷⁴

While CORB and private groups were deciding who was suitable for evacuation, British and Canadian authorities both worked out plans for the transportation of CORB children. Ocean transportation arrangements show that plans were made with the intention of providing the best care for the children. The lengths to which authorities went to protect the children illustrates their perceived importance as Britain's future generation. The problem of finding adequate ships to transport the children was a significant problem impeding evacuation. The sinking of the *Arandora Star* heading to Canada on July 2 led CORB to decide that evacuees must be transported in ships escorted by a convoy. This new policy required even more ships. This, in addition to the defection of the French fleet that decreased the availability of warship escorts, and the United States' withdrawal from all belligerent seas, further strained British shipping capacity. Ships were only required to sail in a convoy for the first 300 miles from Britain, a distance which would later prove deadly. Transporting a party of just 500 children was

⁷⁴ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB". This also had to include that "Dominions' wish for a restricted percentage of Jewish children". Children therefore had their own nominal rolls that were separate from normal passenger lists.

now even more difficult. A “safety ceiling” limiting the number of children had to be determined for each ship.⁷⁵ CORB’s policy of placing the children on escorted ships, even in preference to fast unescorted liners, was also eventually extended to private evacuees.

Shipping shortages were not the only challenges for transportation plans as arrangements for the children’s rail transport were also needed. CORB’s Transport Division was also responsible for making arrangements for the children’s transportation from their homes to the port of embarkation. CORB officials communicated with the British Transport Commission at length as the Commission requested that railway companies (private companies at this time) would be contacted as soon as a shipment was finalised.⁷⁶ Representatives of transport authorities in towns and villages from which evacuees would depart acted as a local point of contact. These were just some of the many individuals dotted across the country playing their own part to make evacuation function. If evacuation were going to occur at the expected rate, railway companies and stations would need to know if groups of children required local services. The Ministry of Transport even wrote to CORB to reinforce the importance of transportation authorities being given details of evacuation. In turn, transportation authorities would notify CORB as to “the times of the trains which these children should catch” as “some of the trains will probably be ordinary trains, but, where the numbers justify, special trains may have to be provided”. Throughout the whole process of evacuation every little detail had to be discussed, negotiated, decided, and carried out, often with numerous people involved across the country from all levels of society. British Transportation Commission files even show that the railways offered children under the age of fourteen a half fare for their travel.⁷⁷ Because of their much smaller numbers and individual planning, such accommodations were not extended to private evacuees. Regardless, when both CORB and private evacuees set off on their train journey towards their port of embarkation, the journey would have been quite lengthy.

⁷⁵ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

⁷⁶ TNA, AN 2/27/1, British Transport Commission, “Children’s Overseas Reception Board”.

⁷⁷ TNA, AN 2/27/1, British Transport Commission, “Children’s Overseas Reception Board”.

Arrangements for railway travel shaped the first step of the evacuees' trans-national journey yet their sea voyage required even more careful planning. The Ministry of Shipping established particular safety guidelines for ships carrying CORB children. Despite their physical size, one child was classified as equivalent to one adult and the maximum number of children permitted on a boat would be determined by the ship's capacity minus its crew and one adult conductor (escort) for every fifteen children. For the children's safety, decks considered unsafe in peacetime could not be used for children.⁷⁸ This meant the physical space of the ship's accommodation area had to be reconfigured to become an appropriate and safe space for the children. Ministry of Transportation files include particulars on how the *Oronsay* had to be altered to accommodate a party of 351 CORB children. Ministry files even include a blueprint of the ship that was redrawn to include special spaces for CORB children. On the blueprint, the ship's decks are labeled from A to F with A being the top deck and Games Deck. Originally the promenade deck with a cafe and lounge, Deck B was divided in two and the café area was reallocated for CORB.⁷⁹ C deck remained unchanged as its berths and cabins were used by other passengers. Cabins on D deck were allocated to CORB and water closets were labeled "boys" and "girls". A large section of the deck was sectioned off for use as the children's hospital. The outdoor "children's deck" on the same level remained in its normal use without special CORB allocation. It is possible that this was a space where CORB children could interact and mingle with non-CORB children aboard. E deck was transformed into the area with berths for CORB children while the bottom F deck had an open space reserved for CORB.⁸⁰ Although it is impossible to know how other ships were transformed and prepared for children, each undoubtedly made some accommodations, often in a matter of days before the ship left port. Not only a logistical matter, these spaces shaped the way the children experienced their trans-Atlantic journey.

⁷⁸ TNA, MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, "Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees".

⁷⁹ TNA, MT 9/3355, Transport Ministries, "Evacuation of children to Canada under the Government scheme".

⁸⁰ TNA, MT 9/3355, Transport Ministries, "Evacuation of children to Canada under the Government scheme".

Strict safety procedures were also established for ships carrying CORB children. To ensure that there was enough help in case of emergency, further safety regulations required that each ship required lifeboats what would be manned by a “statutory number of certified lifeboatmen”. Under the supervision of a Ministry of Shipping Surveyor, a lifeboat drill would have to be directed before the ship left port and all conductors would be provided with very clear instructions for emergency procedures. The conductors were also charged with remembering which lifeboat station was assigned to the children under their care and with understanding how to correctly fit life jackets on the children. Life jackets were another significant safety provision and it was ensured that there were enough to issue one to each child; the Kapok type life jacket (watertight cells filled with Kapok, a vegetable material, rather than hard cork pieces) was determined to be the best option as it was more comfortable and flexible for children.⁸¹ To ensure this provision was followed, the Director of Sea Transport made an arrangement whereby ship owners could be loaned Kapok lifejackets for the children. These special safety regulations came with a hefty price. Plans for the departure of the *Anselm* on July 22, 1940 with eighty-two CORB children aboard caused extra expense. A letter from the Booth Steamship Company to the Ministry of Shipping noted that the company had “been put to a considerable amount of expense in connection with these children”. Part of this extra cost had been from CORB’s local ship Surveyor who had recommended lifeboats provisional for 100 percent of the passengers instead of 50 percent (as required by law). In addition, CORB had required the ship carry extra medical equipment beyond statutory requirements so the company asked if the extra costs could be debited [sic] to the Ministry in the Voyage Account. For permission to transport children, each ship needed to have suitable hospital space for ordinary illness and the isolation of infectious diseases, adequate washing, cleansing, and lavatory facilities for the children, and medical equipment. According to a Ministry’s Medical Inspector from Liverpool, medical

⁸¹ TNA, MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, “Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees”.

supplies such as sera vaccines and drugs for children were considered necessary.⁸² Such provisions illustrate the great lengths taken to ensure the children were unharmed and well cared for during their journey.

To ensure that the children were supervised throughout their journey, escorts were hired to accompany each group of CORB evacuees. Each escort supervised fifteen children. Like other elements of overseas evacuation, the selection of escorts was highly organised and methodical. Yet the selection of escorts and the important role they played in the movement have largely been neglected from the historiography of evacuation. CORB's Welfare Department oversaw the enrollment and selection of escorts, nurses, and doctors. Doctors were selected in co-operation with the British Medical Association and nurses with the Ministry of Health and the British Red Cross. Escorts, without an associated professional organisation, were selected solely by the Advisory Council of CORB after being interviewed.⁸³ As escorts were charged with caring for all the children's needs throughout the journey, escorts needed to be responsible, caring individuals who ideally had some experience in childcare. In addition, to deal with the emergencies of wartime travel they needed to have previous ocean crossing experience, and had to be quite immune to seasickness so as to be able to maintain care whilst the children were ill.⁸⁴ According to CORB records, they also needed to be "sufficiently young and agile to dash after young adventurers with intentions of the rigging or forbidden parts of the ship" and of course, they needed an understanding of children and experience dealing with them "en masse".⁸⁵ Such requirements were even recorded in the *Globe and Mail* in articles like "Evacuee Escorts are Hand-Picked".⁸⁶ Each individual had to submit a standard application to the board that included not only their personal information (name, birth, nationality, address, identity card number) but also their qualifications, experience, and the names of two referees. One successful applicant who

⁸² TNA, MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, "Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees".

⁸³ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

⁸⁴ Ibid. Such requirements were even recorded in Canadian news in articles like "Evacuee Escorts are Hand-Picked", *Globe and Mail*, July 24, 1940.

⁸⁵ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

⁸⁶ "Evacuee Escorts are Hand-Picked", *Globe and Mail*, July 24, 1940.

became an escort for children going to Canada was fifty-six-year-old Edith Gowans. Gowans' application, submitted on June 26, 1940, listed her qualifications as graduate nurse with experience working at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, helping in day nurseries as a welfare worker, and having traveled to Canada and America by ship. She even had a valid passport. According to CORB, Gowans was "an ideal nurse for the purpose". Despite this, CORB was still hesitant about hiring her because she expressed interest in acting as a leader or deputy leader for the children rather than a nurse. In a letter to Miss Maxse, the Advisory Council member wrote "she is evidently a capable woman, but her only experience as a conductress appears to have been in charge of a cruise. Personally, I do not feel satisfied that she has enough experience with children".⁸⁷

CORB even pursued the matter with Lillian Barker, who had provided one of Gowans' references. Barker explained that she knew Gowans "well very indeed" professionally and that Gowans had been a welfare supervisor at Woolwich Arsenal during the last war. As an explanation of Gowans' "professional qualifications for handling children", Barker said that her experience "had a great deal to do with children" and that she had "seen Miss Gowans a great deal amongst children & know[s] how well she gets on with them & manages them & how much they love her".⁸⁸ The reference form also asked if the applicant was absolutely sober, good-tempered and equable, responsible and courageous, a good traveller, physically strong, mentally well-balanced. Barker answered "yes" to all and concluded, "I could confidently recommend her as a leader for she has great initiative and is a quiet thinker and mover". This application process proves that CORB sought escorts who were not only experienced but possessed good physical, intellectual and moral fibre. CORB appeared to take Barker's recommendation as on July 15, 1940, almost three weeks after she initially applied, Gowans received a telegram from Miss Maxse at CORB asking her to report for duty the

⁸⁷ TNA, DO 131/75, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Gowans, Edith: Escort".

⁸⁸ Ibid.

following Friday.⁸⁹ Gowans would go on to accompany the first CORB group to embark for Canada but did so as a nurse rather than an escort.⁹⁰

Escorting children overseas became a patriotic expression and a contribution to the war effort. This rigorous application process certainly did not deter women as CORB received no less than 19,000 applications.⁹¹ This number, however, does not include hundreds of other women who offered to escort children across the Atlantic by writing to private organisations and individuals involved in private evacuation. Private evacuees, especially those going in school groups, also needed escorts. Although these groups were mostly escorted by school masters and mistresses, the movement did cause many women to write to the National Council of Education of Canada to offer help. On July 19, 1940 Mildred Johnstone wrote to Major Ney to offer to become an escort. As a school mistress, Johnstone explained that she was anxious to do some National Service during her summer holiday, so much so that she not only did not wish to be paid, only wanting travelling expenses for both ways, but was also prepared to travel on a ship without a convoy. As qualifications, she explained her experience caring for and leading children at her own boarding school and described herself as fifty-five but “young for [her] age and very attractive”. In such planning, however, authorities had to be careful of individuals who offered to escort children just so they could have a one-way passage paid for them and live out the war in Canada. May Hopkins wanted a one-way passage to Canada and wrote to P. M. Heywood at the National Council of Education of Canada to explain that her daughter was in one of the school groups “stranded” in Canada before the war and that she was “very anxious to get to her for very strong and personal reasons”.⁹² Hopkins

⁸⁹ TNA, DO 131/75, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Gowans, Edith: Escort”.

⁹⁰ Ancestry, *Anselm* Nominal roll, August 2, 1940 arrival. In comparison, the application of fifty-two year old Mabel Betsy Wood listed sixteen years’ experience working as a Lady courier for Thomas Cook and Son staff with particular experience escorting children, and much sea travel experience by constantly crossing the Channel. Unlike Gowans, Wood’s experience seemed to impress someone within CORB as attached to her application was an unsigned note reading “has done some ARP...charge of children on voyages. Very capable and sensible. Does not look her age. Strongly recommended.” Not only did experience with the Air Raid Precautions reinforce Wood’s application but her youthful appearance was evidentially also an asset. Wood was accepted by CORB and subsequently escorted children to Australia.

⁹¹ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

⁹² LAC, MG30-D245, “Frederick James Ney Fonds”.

did travel to Canada in June 1940, but shipping lists suggest she traveled as an ordinary passenger.⁹³ That neither Mildred Johnstone nor May Hopkins became escorts may have been down to the regulation that each private group needed to arrange for its own escorts. Yet even in private circumstances, escorts were still declined. Records from the National Council of Education of Canada contain a series of letters in which Headmistress Hilda Violet Stuart from Sherborne School for Girls in Dorset wrote to P. M. Heywood on June 29, 1940 asking if she could include “Miss Liebler” as one of her staff to accompany a group of Sherborne girls traveling to Toronto. Stuart explained that she wished to include her as “the school’s best music mistress” and a capable teacher of German. The issue was that Liebler was German-born. In her defence, Stuart argued that she was “neither a Nazi, a Jewess or political at all” and explained that she even “got into trouble with the Nazis and was put on trial three times”. In support of her colleague, Stuart noted Liebler as being “entirely loyal to the British Empire” to the extent that she had “already offered her blood for blood transfusion and has worked extremely hard in helping the children with war work”. On July 1, 1940 Mr. Heywood responded by stating that “it would be impossible for Miss Liebler to enter Canada at this time”. He suggested they write to the Commissioner for Immigration for an authoritative ruling on the matter but added that he could not “hold out much hope for you”.⁹⁴ Despite Liebler’s experience in working with children, her German heritage excluded her application to escort children to Canada. This was not only a statement of the council’s preference but also an indication of Canada’s restrictions on wartime immigration.

Even greater was the satisfaction of knowing that they were contributing to the war effort by helping evacuees. For their efforts, CORB escorts received five pounds for a return trip to Canada while nurses and chief escorts were paid at the higher rate of seven pounds ten shillings for a return trip.⁹⁵ Their railway fare to the port and back and return boat passage were paid by CORB with an additional small grant to pay for any

⁹³ Ancestry, *Duchess of Bedford*, June 24, 1940 departure. There are no passenger lists showing that Mildred Johnstone made the journey.

⁹⁴ LAC, MG30-D245, “Frederick James Ney Fonds”.

⁹⁵ TNA, DO 131/44, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Children Evacuated to Canada Under CORB scheme”. See DO 131/75 for more information such as baggage allowance.

pocket expenses such as meal on trains. While waiting in Canada for a return passage, escorts were given free accommodation or a daily subsistence allowance. For this remuneration, the job of the Children's Overseas Escort Service began long before the children boarded the ships.⁹⁶ Some escorts made reservations for hostel accommodation at ports.⁹⁷ Chief escorts, it was suggested by the Ministry of Transport, had to visit the ship and meet the Captain and the shipping line authorities prior to the boat's departure.⁹⁸ Escorts were given sometimes only forty-eight hours' notice of departure. They were met at the port by children who had traveled with their teachers and local escorts.⁹⁹ Once the children had assembled at the port, each escort took charge of a group of fifteen children; from that point onwards they were responsible for all the children's care, discipline, and comfort, and even made reports on each child.¹⁰⁰ Chaplain escorts or ministers such as Peter Jones looked after children of their own faith but also had to tend to the spiritual needs of the rest of the groups.¹⁰¹ Escorts contributed to children's safety by instructing and drilling them on the emergency procedures such as how to put on their life jackets and where to assemble for the lifeboats.¹⁰² Upon arrival, the evacuees' initial journey ended while escorts still had to get back to Britain. Once Canadian authorities assumed responsibility for the new arrivals after disembarkation, the escorts' tasks were finally complete.

Both escorts and evacuees shared the same risk of being torpedoed during the journey and the added dangers of ocean crossing during choppy weather. Dominion Office files illustrate the extent of the danger. A file memo dated December 7, 1940 noted that a ship returning twenty-three escorts to Britain became "a victim of enemy action" and was reported as lost". News of the attack had not then reached the press and

⁹⁶ TNA, DO 131/76, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Wood, Mabel".

⁹⁷ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB", DO 131/75, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Gowans, Edith".

⁹⁸ TNA, MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, "Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees".

⁹⁹ TNA, DO 131/76, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Wood, Mabel".

¹⁰⁰ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² TNA, MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, "Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees".

letters were sent to notify the escorts' next-of-kin. Addressed only to "Sir", J. Cuthrie Clothier wrote:

We deeply regret to inform you that the ship in which your wife was returning from Australia is reported to have been lost through enemy action. There are no particulars yet of the survivors and it is possible that the passengers may either be in life-boats or in enemy hands. It must not be presumed at this stage that they have lost their lives. As, however, the news of the loss of this ship may be published at any moment, I thought it only right to tell you the position as we know it. We realise the depth of anxiety and suffering this will cause but there is still hope that the passengers and crew may be safe.¹⁰³

The ship was later identified as the *Rangitane*, which was shelled and sunk on November 27, 1940.¹⁰⁴ Six escorts were killed or died of wounds, while one was kept as a prisoner-of-war. In addition, eight escorts were captured after the *Port Wellington* sank and were taken to prison camp in Germany where one died. Six were released three years later.¹⁰⁵ Although escorts risked their lives in order to help save Britain's children, they seldom receive the historical attention they deserve. In total, CORB approved approximately one thousand individuals as escorts. In the end, only 237 escorts along with eighteen doctors and forty-nine nurses were able to take up their duty and transport evacuees to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.¹⁰⁶ Many more escorts ensured private evacuees arrived safely in Canada.

British and Canadian authorities carefully negotiated every minute detail of evacuation, and this even came to include the way that children were prepared for their impending departure. All evacuees had been physically prepared in the sense that their

¹⁰³ TNA, DO 131/16, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "1940-1941, Escorts: Casualties".

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB". One of those six was Miss Mabel Wood, mentioned in footnotes on page 122. She was returning from escorting CORB children to Australia. Along with other newly released prisoners, Wood made her way back to England via Lisbon in 1943.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

physical bodies were inspected. To protect the children's bodies while in Canada, CORB forwarded a packing list for parents. Due to the differences in climate across the British Empire, CORB children going to Canada received a different list from those traveling to the other Dominions. Boys and girls also had separate lists, although at the top of both packing lists was a gas mask.¹⁰⁷ Evacuees had to pack one mackintosh or an overcoat for boys and a warm coat for girls. They also needed a hat, a cardigan (girls) or pullover (boys), two pairs of stockings, two pairs of pants and two undervests for boys and one change of underclothing for girls, one pair of strong boots or shoes and one pair of plimsolls, and two pairs of pajamas. In addition, boys also had to take a suit and two coloured shirts, while girls had to take warm gloves, one warm dress or skirt, two cotton dresses or overalls with knickers. For personal care, both boys and girls had to pack one comb (or hairbrush for girls), one towel, six handkerchiefs, a face flannel (or sponge for girls), and a toothbrush and toothpaste. Girls also had the additional requirement of packing one linen bag, one attaché case or haversack, a sewing outfit, and sanitary towels.¹⁰⁸ Finally, both boys and girls had to ensure that they had also packed their ration card, identity card, birth certificate (if possible), stationary and pencil, and a Bible or New Testament. All of their belongings had to fit into a suitcase 26" x 18" as no trunks were permitted. Their suitcases would then be marked in indelible ink with the children's name and CORB number. In addition to clothing and personal items, each child had to take enough food and "thirst quenching fruit" to last twenty-four hours for the journey. Examples of suitable food included: sandwiches (egg and cheese), packets of nuts and seedless raisins, dry biscuits and packets of cheese, barley sugar (not chocolate, presumably because of its propensity to melting), apples, bananas, and oranges.¹⁰⁹ This, of course, all had to be done within the limitations of rationing which had begun in

¹⁰⁷ This was not so evacuees would take their gas masks overseas with them but ensured they had them on hand until they set sail. It also meant that gas masks could be collected and redistributed to those children remaining in Britain.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, AST 11/101, Unemployment Assistance Board, "Children's Overseas Reception Board: Clothing for children".

¹⁰⁹ TNA, AST 11/101, Unemployment Assistance Board, "Children's Overseas Reception Board: Clothing for children". TNA, DO131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

January, 1940 and with shortages (particularly in fruit like oranges and bananas) caused by shipping disruptions.¹¹⁰

Private evacuees had no such standard list. If they were travelling alone, it would have been entirely up to their parents or guardian to estimate what necessities were required. Canadian contacts for groups and schools may have provided some suggestions for warm clothing. The British Transport Commission, however, provided the following suggestions for parents preparing their child for private evacuation: children were only to take as much luggage as they could carry and keep with them in the railway compartment. Another suggestion was to ensure that each luggage was clearly labeled with the child's name and National Registration Number (as they had no CORB number as identification). At minimum, most likely adhered to the advice that they should pack their children with "warm clothing, strong footwear, and spare underclothing".¹¹¹ When private evacuee Catherine Anderson's parents were notified of her evacuation, she was kept home from school and taken to London. Her mother bought her new clothes, all a size too big. Her mother asked for the heaviest winter coat the shop had, which turned out to be of navy blue Melton cloth wool and which was then taken to a dressmaker to have a warm lining added.¹¹² For her new suitcase, Catherine Anderson was allowed to choose one doll and her parents added two large brand new storybooks. Parents of private evacuee with disposable income may have had less trouble with kitting out their children than some working-class CORB parents. If CORB parents were not in a position to collect all the items on the list, the British Unemployment Assistance Board accepted applications from individuals to help provide the children with the articles of clothing they required for the voyage. For costlier items like coats, however, the board could only provide either a warm coat or a mackintosh, not both. The Unemployment Assistance Board would also supply CORB children with socks collected by the Women's Voluntary

¹¹⁰ Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War* (New York: Penguin Press, 2013).

¹¹¹ TNA, AN 2/27/2, British Transport Commission, "Children's Overseas Reception Board: Evacuation of children from the North East coastal areas to Canada via Glasgow".

¹¹² Catherine Anderson recalls that her coat was later "pronounced by my foster-mother as being "a very good coat, but not warm enough for our winters". Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson".

Service.¹¹³ Many parents, of both CORB and private evacuees, found the process of trying to prepare their children's bags to be quite stressful. Clothes not only needed to be packed but new articles had to be purchased while others had to be washed and reinforced to ensure that they lasted as long as possible. Exacerbating this was the fact that children grow and therefore it was more than likely that the children would grow out of their packed clothing by the time they returned to Britain anyway. Yet many parents took this process very seriously because they also wanted to ensure that their children would appear presentable and attractive to Canadian foster parents.

Preparing the family for the impending separation was another element of preparing their children for evacuation and was wholly left up to British parents. Parents who were getting ready to say goodbye to their children were, in their own ways, also preparing the children emotionally for the separation. As parents worked out details for their children's movement, either through submitting CORB applications or corresponding with Canadian contacts, many of these plans were kept from children. While their children may have been unaware, parents would have been preparing themselves for their children's departure. British parents who were sending their child privately to a relation in Canada particularly had the opportunity to prepare themselves by corresponding with the Canadian foster parents. Soon-to-be-foster parents were well aware of the difficult decision evacuee parents had to go through. Robert Simpson who agreed to take Patricia and Colin Cave, wrote to their father on June 19, 1940, "We fully realise that parting with them will be a heartbreaking ordeal but [it] seems to be the only unselfish way under the circumstances".¹¹⁴ In reply, Rex Cave cabled, "Cannot express extent of gratitude for wonderful kindness".

It was only when news of the children's sailing date came that some parents told their children of their impending separation. No advice literature from CORB any other group on how to emotionally prepare their children for the separation was seemingly given to evacuee parents. Although not out of the ordinary for the time, the lack of any

¹¹³ TNA, AST 11/101, Unemployment Assistance Board, "Children's Overseas Reception Board: Clothing for children".

¹¹⁴ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

advice meant that parents were left to tell their children as much or as little as they wanted. Patricia Cave's father simply explained to her and her brother that they were going to Toronto to live with Mr. and Mrs. Simpson. It was Patricia's father who "prepared [her] for the experience" and who spent a great deal of time instructing her on how she was supposed to behave. Her father also clearly outlined that she had to be responsible for her six-and-a-half year old brother, a great burden of responsibility for the shoulders of a nine-year-old. As they were told of their departure, the Cave children were taken to their father's office where they recorded their voices on his Dictaphone.¹¹⁵ This luxury would not have been available to many evacuee parents but Patricia's father's actions illustrate his attempt to keep a part of his children with him, the sounds of their voices being a powerful reminder of them. Some mothers with daughters, knowing that their young girls may grow into young women before they saw them again, took the opportunity to explain the birds and the bees and the "life changes". The night before thirteen-year-old Margaret Burt Hamilton's departure, her mother told her about the need to use sanitary napkins.¹¹⁶ In preparation, Catherine Anderson's mother ensured that she knew the words of the Lord's Prayer while her father instructed her to tell people that he was "a commercial traveller" if they asked about his job.¹¹⁷ The night before she left, the minister from the Baptist church where she attended Sunday school and the Brownies and those who lived next door came to her house to pray for her wellbeing. The minister gave her an inscribed Bible.¹¹⁸ In another effort to prepare Patricia Cave, the night before she departed, her father came into her room and gave her some Canadian dollars and coins. For Patricia, this was the moment her evacuation became real; in reaction to this "bombshell" she refused to go. For the first time, Patricia cried over the decision and her father attempted to comfort her by telling her she would only be gone for six months but

¹¹⁵ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave". Paddy Cave, Memoir, *War Guest*.

¹¹⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Burt Hamilton".

¹¹⁷ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson". He worked at a flourmill.

¹¹⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson". She notes that the bible finally disintegrated in 2014.

it was too late; the difference in money starkly symbolised the distance and change that lay ahead.¹¹⁹

As British parents were preparing to say goodbye, Canadian soon-to-be foster parents were preparing to welcome the children into their homes. Homes across the country were tidied and cleaned in preparation, particularly homes accepting private children or nominated CORB homes as they would be aware of what preparations needed to be made. An article *For Our Guests* in the University of Toronto magazine recorded the efforts to prepare for the evacuees' arrival: "to restore order and stability and familiarity, of which children need a certain amount if they are to grow up as successful as possible, had been the task of workers on this side arranging for the guests to be placed in Canadian homes". Another university publication reported "the amateur carpentry and painting that thus began...studies turned into bedrooms, single beds into double-deckers, extra chairs for dining rooms, extra leaves in tables".¹²⁰ Mrs. Henry Brock donated her Oakville home, Broxstowe House, for a group of fourteen English boys and the community enthusiastically joined in preparing the house.¹²¹ Once notified that her cousin Vincent Holman was going to come to Canada, six-year-old Lois Davidson became excited for his arrival despite being turfed out of her pink room so it could be decorated for Vincent. Canadians prepared to become foster parents, some never having children of their own, while Canadian children were told that other children would soon join the family.¹²² These perspectives are often omitted from the historical narrative of evacuation as they are absent from wartime sources written about evacuees.

Finally, after months of planning and waiting, on July 4, 1940 the first groups of private evacuees landed in Canada after the shock of the Fall of France. Aboard the *Duchess of Atholl* were twenty-eight children (and five female adults) from Byron House School heading to Ottawa, one hundred girls from St. Hilda's School bound for Toronto (eight female adults), thirty girls from Sherborne school (and three adult females), and

¹¹⁹ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave". Paddy Cave, Memoir, *War Guest*.

¹²⁰ UOTA, B1972-0004/001 (07) "University of Toronto, Women's War Service Committee".

¹²¹ "Broxstowe House Ready for Teen-age English Boys", *Evening Telegram*, July 26, 1940.

¹²² There is no literature on the perspective of Canadian foster-siblings.

forty-eight girls from Roedean School (with no adult escorts) who were traveling to Edgehill School in Windsor, Nova Scotia.¹²³ It was with this first shipment of British children that the Canadian government began keeping close statistics on evacuee children, recording each by name. The *Duchess of Richmond* sailed for Quebec not long after on July 6 with ten children and one female from the Benenden School going to Montreal and one male accompanying forty-seven children to Ashbury College in Ottawa. The *Monarch of Bermuda* sailed for Halifax on July 12 carrying three females and twenty-six children and the *Duchess of Richmond* sailed to Quebec on July 31, 1940 with fifteen children supervised by four females.¹²⁴ By the end of the month, evacuation was in full swing with 304 newly arrived evacuees on Canadian soil and the first sailing of CORB evacuees. On July 31, the *Anselm* departed for Canada carrying eighty-two CORB evacuees. Throughout August, the flow of private and CORB evacuees would only steadily increase.

For both CORB and private evacuees, the experience of saying goodbye to their parents became, for many, their first memory of evacuation and one which shaped their lasting memory. Margaret Burt Hamilton's parents did not discuss her impending evacuation. Instead it was two new suitcases that arrived at her house that suggested to her and her five-year-old brother that something was afoot.¹²⁵ Choosing a particular moment of juxtaposition, it was one night as the family sat in the air raid shelter that her mother explained that they were going to Canada. The next day they prepared their suitcases for the journey. Catherine MacKinnon's family never discussed evacuation so she was "totally shocked and surprised" when her mother told her and her sister Anne that they were going to Canada within forty-eight hours.¹²⁶ Christine Bolus was told that her evacuation would be an adventure and this seemed to satisfy her until the day of her

¹²³ LAC, RG 26, Immigration Branch, "Vol 16: Statistical Tabulations". Canadian records use the term "Sherborne School" although the formal name is Sherborne School for Girls or Sherborne Girls. "A Brief History", Sherborne Girls, accessed April 12, 2015, <http://www.sherborne.com/A-brief-history>.

¹²⁴ Ibid. Author's Evacuee Database. The government list only recorded children who were unaccompanied and did not come with family.

¹²⁵ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Burt Hamilton".

¹²⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Catherine Read née Mackinnon".

departure came. She desperately wanted to change her mind but by then it was too late.¹²⁷ Six-year-old Stella Pickering had also been told; her parents asked if she would like to go on a holiday to Canada.¹²⁸ She assumed the whole family would be going. When the big day came to leave, she and her sister boarded the bus, sitting right at the back, but to her horror realised that her mother and father had not boarded. As she yelled for the driver to stop the bus and wait for her parents, another child coldly told her to “not be so stupid as of course they were not coming”. From that moment, Stella remembered crying inconsolably and no one could pacify her. Aged just six, Min Roberts was given a lunch box packed by her mother and was told to be brave for the “trip across the sea”.¹²⁹ She said goodbye to “a tearful family” on the platform at Hebburn Station. Even at such a young age, these memories have remained clear in Min’s mind. Josephine Robson said goodbye to her parents at Romford railway station; it was the first time she had ever seen a man, let alone her father, with tears in his eyes.¹³⁰ Such experiences were traumatic for both CORB and private evacuees but act as their first memories of their evacuation. Some others, like Catherine Anderson, do not remember saying goodbye because “it is missing from the frames of memory”.¹³¹ Embedded within goodbyes, parents like those of Thelma Freedman told their children to stick together, for older siblings to look after younger ones, and for authorities not to separate them.¹³² Due to secrecy, the evacuees were also unable to say goodbye to schoolmates, neighbours, and even some relatives.¹³³ To those individuals, one day the children were there and the next they were gone.

After tearful goodbyes, evacuees’ journeys began. The differences in the organisation of evacuation for private and CORB evacuees meant that the children’s experiences sometimes varied and were sometimes similar. The experiences of evacuees

¹²⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Christine Bolus”.

¹²⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Stella Bates nee Pickering”.

¹²⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Min Hunter nee Roberts”.

¹³⁰ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Josephine Robson”. It is interesting to note that male evacuees, in their accounts, do not tend to mention such memories.

¹³¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”. Others were too young or the memory has been “blacked out”.

¹³² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Thelma Freedman Interview”.

¹³³ David Cornish recalls how he was unable to say goodbye to his “school chums” at Purley County School for Boys before he left for Canada. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “David Cornish”.

before they left Britain must not be overlooked.¹³⁴ Private evacuees travelling as large groups met at a central area or a local train station where parents said their goodbyes. If able to make the journey, the parents of private evacuees traveling only with siblings often traveled with their children to the port of embarkation. Margaret Beal, for instance, left Scarborough at 10:55am and finally reached the port at Liverpool at 4:45pm.¹³⁵ Patricia and Colin Cave's father took them by train to Glasgow and the next day said goodbye and sent them on their way. For security reasons, parents could not enter the port nor board their children onto the ship. Private evacuee parents tried to help their children with the journey. To prepare his daughter for the journey, Patricia Cave's father wrote a detailed letter with careful instructions for when they arrived at the port, boarded the ship, landed in Canada, and arrived at the train. He instructed Patricia that, once on board, she should go to the purser to give him their keys, passports, medical cares, rail tickets, sleeping birth ticket, £20, and their birth certificates. Patricia would have to remember to collect all of this upon docking and then would have to ensure that their luggage was loaded onto the train.¹³⁶ Although the ship officials were technically in charge of unattended children until they were handed off at their final destination, that her father wrote such a letter illustrates that individual private evacuees did not benefit from close attention of escorts and would only have the ship's stewardesses for assistance. For the journey, Patricia's father also gave her a letter to remind her and Colin of life's lessons in case he never saw her again. He wrote:

My darling Paddy and Colin (4.7.40) I do hope you will have a good time on the way to Toronto and while you are there. You are going on a visit to friends and will have lots of fun, and new experiences. They will do their best for you. I want you to remember several things. If you do, it will show that you have learned what Mummy and Daddy have tried to teach you. Be obedient; that is do as you are told by people who have the right to tell you. But don't forget that you have to decide whether they have the right to tell

¹³⁴ Historians like Bilson jump from the planning of evacuation, to the children's arrival, and then focus on their experience in Canada. There is the idea that CORB and private evacuees had very different experiences, with private evacuees being starkly more privileged. To establish whether this argument is valid, the narrative of evacuees' experiences must begin before they depart rather than only once they arrive in Canada.

¹³⁵ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Smolenski nee Beal".

¹³⁶ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

you. If there is no one who has that right you must decide for yourself what to do. Be honest. You both are this. Nothing you take which you should not will ever do you any good, not even a mere advantage. Be truthful. If you have done something you should not have done don't be afraid to say so if you are asked or even if you are not. An untruth makes things twice as bad. Be kind and generous, but not foolish. If you give someone all you have, you will have nothing either for yourself or for someone else who may need it more. But never fail to help other people by being nice. Ask for things rather than ordering them. Remember if you are speaking to someone waiting on you think how you would like to be treated if you were waiting on them, and not feeling well. Be brave. If you are certain it is right to do a thing, do it and you will never be afraid. Fear God, honour the King. Bye Paddy and Colin. Have a good time. Your loving Daddy, Rex Don't forget that you will have to work too at school, no work you do is ever lost. Be patient. Remember that being impatient probably won't make things happen any faster and only shows that you are bad mannered.¹³⁷

His heartfelt letter was clearly cherished as it survived not only the journey to Canada but also the seventy-five years since.

As private evacuees made their way individually to ports, the first stage of CORB evacuees' journey was highly regulated or organised. CORB's Transportation Division organised inland transport, establishing collection points at railway-stations. It was at the railway station that children would finally see if any of their friends or schoolmates were also traveling to Canada. When Margaret Beal arrived at the railway station she found around fourteen other children from the area. This included two girls whom she knew from school, two boys she remembered from elementary school, and two very small children who lived in the same area as her.¹³⁸ Similarly, David Cornish arrived at the station with his father and spotted another boy wearing the same school uniform. Cornish hardly knew the boy, Tony Kissinger, but they became quick friends.¹³⁹ The unfamiliar and uneasy experience meant that children often gravitated to anyone remotely familiar. Accompanied by local escorts or teachers, the children were taken by train to a central meeting area or a hostel near the port.¹⁴⁰ While some private evacuees were escorted by

¹³⁷ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

¹³⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Beal".

¹³⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "David Cornish".

¹⁴⁰ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

their parents to the port, all CORB children said their goodbyes at the local train station or local meeting point such as their school. Part of this was logistical so that parents did not have to travel themselves to the port but partly it was also to ensure that the children could board the ship swiftly without the emotional confusion of saying goodbye to their parents and family.

CORB transported the children to hostels near the port where the children would wait to sail. These “hostels” were often actually empty classrooms in schools. Air raids often struck the ports which added extra anxiety to organisers ensuring the children’s safety. Many evacuees, especially those from designated evacuated areas, were familiar with air raids.¹⁴¹ Margaret Burt Hamilton was taken from a school in Liverpool to a large underground shelter as the noise of planes, bombs, and guns raged.¹⁴² The unreliability of ships exacerbated the embarkation process. Geoffrey Shakespeare in a speech in 1941 explained that “ships in wartime are as diffident and erratic as girls in love. They are neither reliable nor punctual. They are due at one port and turn up at another”.¹⁴³ Last-minute transportation plans had to be made while the children had to be entertained and comforted at hostels. Older evacuees often lent a hand to care for younger children. Margaret Beal wrote in her diary that when she and some other girls attempted to put the little ones to bed they “tried to sing them lullabies, but instead of making them sleep, they only asked for more”.¹⁴⁴ This time at the hostels provided valuable time to complete some final preparations for the long voyage. The children’s heads were cleaned (and deloused) and unsuitable and perishable food was taken out of suitcases. Each child’s suitcase was then inspected. Suitcases also needed to be properly labeled and equipped with the necessary clothing items although CORB recorded that it was “practically impossible to find special identification labels that would stick” to the suitcases.¹⁴⁵ Gordon Jones recalled some fellow evacuees hardly had enough clothes to fill their small

¹⁴¹ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

¹⁴² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Burt Hamilton”. No CORB children perished while waiting to leave Britain.

¹⁴³ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Speeches and General Surveys”. Shakespeare made the speech at the Victoria League annual meeting on July 15, 1941.

¹⁴⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Beal”.

¹⁴⁵ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

suitcase.¹⁴⁶ If a child was missing an article of clothing they were assigned items by the Women's Voluntary Service.¹⁴⁷ Simon Marks (of Marks and Spencer) even provided a clothing supply of up to a maximum of £7500.¹⁴⁸ Some found these preparations overwhelming. David Cornish had a "sudden panic attack" about leaving that became so bad that he was permitted to call home. He was strongly warned not to mention where he was, or when he would be sailing; a supervisor at his elbow ensured that he let nothing slip his lips.¹⁴⁹

When the time came to begin their ocean journey, CORB's Transport Division organised road transportation to the port.¹⁵⁰ Mary Hume was faced with a dilemma as her brother, six years younger, started to run a high fever. Her brother was sent home and Mary was asked if she wanted to continue her journey. A difficult decision for any child, Mary decided that she would continue on to Canada and thus left her brother behind in England.¹⁵¹ Upon arrival at the port the children would then be passed off to CORB escorts who would be responsible for them for the whole boat journey. Just like the private evacuees, CORB children would then have to pass through security, customs, and other shipping formalities.¹⁵² By passing through this process and boarding the boat, these evacuees had surpassed the geographical movement that was taken by domestic evacuees whose major journeys ended with a train ride. Another distinguishing factor between domestic and overseas evacuees became their identification. Domestic evacuees had to wear paper luggage labels and many children resented the fact that they were "labeled like a package".¹⁵³ Evacuees traveling to Canada instead were given disks with

¹⁴⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "W. Gordon Jones".

¹⁴⁷ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

¹⁴⁸ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Speeches and General Surveys". Shakespeare made the speech at the Victoria League annual meeting on July 15, 1941.

According to Shakespeare, the children were so well clothed that "one party of Middlesbrough children, all from working class homes, proceeding to the landing stage and they looked so smart in the suits and dresses provided at the hostel that the woman next to me cried out "look, there go the children of the rich!"

¹⁴⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "David Cornish".

¹⁵⁰ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

¹⁵¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Mary Richardson".

¹⁵² TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

¹⁵³ Hilda Hollingsworth, *They Tied a Label on my Coat* (London: Virago Press, 1991).

their CORB number on it to be tied around their necks.¹⁵⁴ Canadians such as Director of the Canadian Council on Child Welfare Charlotte Whitton wanted metal identification disks but such material could be put to better use for the war effort.¹⁵⁵ Instead evacuees were given celluloid disks, a material that would withstand a shipwreck and which, the children were told, would make it impossible for the number to be “sucked away” by the children.¹⁵⁶ Such a small detail of the evacuation became a memorable part of the children’s evacuation experience. The occasion of having “their new labels...tied on” was noteworthy enough for Margaret Beal to record in her diary.¹⁵⁷

Either at the hostels or at the port, Geoffrey Shakespeare made an effort to see each group of evacuees before they departed. Margaret Beal recorded that before they left Glasgow to catch the boat from Greenock, Shakespeare and the Provost of Glasgow visited them.¹⁵⁸ Such visits were often utilised as a photo opportunity that represented Shakespeare in his role as “uncle”. One such photo of children about to leave for Canada appears in his memoir; Shakespeare is placed in the middle of children as they walk hand in hand towards the camera with smiles on their faces. That every individual is mid-step and leading with their right leg hints that the photo was carefully staged.¹⁵⁹ In case parents had not sufficiently prepared their children with a suitably rousing talk, Shakespeare used the opportunity to remind the children of their duty. He reminded the children they did not represent themselves but instead, were going “as the children of Britain”; they were “British ambassadors and consequently must behave even better than they knew how”. According to Shakespeare, part of being Britain’s children meant that “when things go wrong, as they often will, remember you are British and grin and bear it”. With great care he chose four attributes which he considered to be important for

¹⁵⁴ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

¹⁵⁵ LAC, MG20-E256, “Charlotte Whitton Fonds.”

¹⁵⁶ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Speeches and General Surveys”. Shakespeare made the speech at the Victoria League annual meeting on July 15, 1941. In his speech Shakespeare referred to the disks as “the sacred emblem” suggesting that this was already perceived to be the fundamental identifier of CORB evacuees differentiating them from domestic evacuees.

¹⁵⁷ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Beal”.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Shakespeare, *Let the Candles be Brought In*, 224.

children: “be truthful, be brave, be kind, be grateful”.¹⁶⁰ Shakespeare’s words were eerily similar to those of Patricia Cave’s father. With their stiff-upper-lip as per instructions, CORB evacuees boarded their ships and waited for the next part of their journey to begin. Of the sight, Shakespeare recorded that “It was always a thrilling experience but a rather mournful one to see hundreds of small children climbing the gangway, each clutching his authorised bag of luggage. Some of them were homesick, many of them showed signs of nervous exhaustion through lack of sleep from air-raids”.¹⁶¹ “But a child’s make-up is more resilient than that of a grown up”, he argued, “and the thrill of the strange adventure of embarking for an unknown destination, which stirs the breast even of the experienced traveller, sent waves of emotion through these excited children”. Margaret Beal recorded in her diary that at the port, a man “pulled half of [their] new labels off” and read their surnames whilst another ticked their names off on a piece of paper.¹⁶² As both private and CORB evacuees boarded they were instructed to give in their gas masks, an item that symbolised their war experience was about to change drastically. The memory of turning her gas mask in as she boarded the *Duchess of Bedford* remains with Catherine Anderson: “it had been drilled into me that the gas mask must go everywhere with me and I must never never lose it. But here was a grownup issuing this worrying instruction, so onto the heap it went”.¹⁶³

As the first CORB ships departed Britain, in typical fashion of the well-organised evacuation, the efficiency of the process and safety regulations were scrutinised. The Transport Ministry decided to file a record of the shipping and boarding process for the *Oronsay*. The ship was chosen for the voyage after Don Jackson, a surveyor from the Ministry, had inspected the ship and found it in sound condition. It had all satisfactory lifesaving appliances, and the area for children’s accommodation was found acceptable as

¹⁶⁰ Shakespeare, *Let the Candles be Brought In*, 257. He included anecdotes that reinforced his words “I was amused to hear on several occasions that some of my advice had borne fruit. Across the other side of Canada, at a railway station in the early morning, an escort found a small girl of seven weeping bitterly. Suddenly a girl of eleven went up to her and said: ‘Stop it at once and be British!’ And the escort recorded that the child immediately pulled herself together.”

¹⁶¹ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Speeches and General Surveys”. Shakespeare made the speech at the Victoria League annual meeting on July 15, 1941.

¹⁶² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

¹⁶³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

the lowest berths and the emergency stations could be reached in one minute “without too much panic”. After final consultations with various individuals to confirm the children’s accommodation and hospital, plans for embarkation were set. On August 10, 1940 at 1:00 p.m. 351 children were brought by tender to the ship with their escorts; once on board, the children were free to settle into their cabins and had their midday meal. The escorts promptly began instructing the children on their life jackets and emergency procedures for a full emergency drill that was to occur later in which fourteen boats were lowered to the embarkation desk. Some children were even lowered into two lifeboats for demonstration purposes. Jackson closed the report by stating that “he was satisfied with the arrangements so far as they applied to the CORB party, as so far as possible in the time available with the whole ship”. This satisfaction was shared by M. Churchard from the Ministry of Shipping who wrote to T.E. Metcalfe on August 13, 1940 to explain that he witnessed one of the CORB parties embarking for Canada aboard the *Oronsay* from the Liverpool docks. Although Churchard thought the yard-long menu was a bit “superfluous”, seeing the children embark and put through drills quickly and efficiently was “quite admirable” as no child got lost in any drills and the children thought being lowered into lifeboats was “enormous fun”.¹⁶⁴ Even the Ministry of Health was involved in creating diets for the children on board for their journey.¹⁶⁵ Churchard closed by stating that “considering there had only been 36 hours in which to transform the *Oronsay* from a Trooper into a Nursery...it seemed to me that everyone concerned had done a very good job very quickly”.¹⁶⁶ Such preparations were only the beginning of the evacuees’ journey to Canada that would become, for some, a very memorable aspect of their evacuation.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, MT 9/3355, Transport Ministries, “Evacuation of Children to Canada under the Government Scheme”.

¹⁶⁵ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

¹⁶⁶ TNA, MT 9/3355, Transport Ministries, “Evacuation of Children to Canada under the Government Scheme”.

As their ships slowly began to sail away, evacuees waved goodbye to home. Whether CORB or private evacuees, this was an experience shared by all children. Whilst aboard, Anthony Paish recorded the sight to his parents, writing, “We could see Scotland and Ireland on both sides when we were going down the Irish channel and also a light house on the Scottish side”.¹⁶⁷ Margaret Beal recorded in her diary that they “stood on deck and watched the land get further and further away”.¹⁶⁸ Out of all the Dominions, Canada was the shortest journey for evacuees, as the crossing was only approximately ten days. Comparatively, the journey for evacuees going to New Zealand was forty-eight days.¹⁶⁹ Despite this relatively short trip, the trans-Atlantic journey was a new experience for both private and CORB evacuees. For Peter Horlock, who was travelling as a Ford evacuee, the journey was an exciting experience where he could meet other children.¹⁷⁰ Being out at sea also brought plenty of new sights. Margaret Beal went to the cinema one night and went on deck afterwards and saw the spectacular sight of the moon above the water.¹⁷¹ Veronica Owens took the opportunity to record a beautiful sight for her parents recording that she “went up on deck and the spray quite continually came over [them]”. She continued “there was quite a good swell, but I personally never felt better in my life. During the afternoon the sun came out and the sea was a glorious colour it was a greeny blue...there are clouds all over the land, they are quite stationary and look much more apart and independent than the English ones”.¹⁷²

Once aboard, evacuees were settled into their cabins. Private evacuees traveling individually like Patricia and Colin Cave purchased their berths whilst CORB evacuees were assigned their sleeping accommodation. CORB adopted the policy that sleeping accommodation would be separated by gender although the children were told that they

¹⁶⁷ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”. It is important to consider the evacuees’ journeys. Not only do they use it as the start of their evacuation narrative but their ocean crossing experiences have been neglected in works such as Starns and Bilson.

¹⁶⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

¹⁶⁹ Starns, *Oceans Apart*, 72.

¹⁷⁰ “We Remember: Safe Haven”, Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 20, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/39/safe-haven.html>.

¹⁷¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

¹⁷² IWM, Documents, 134, “Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens.”

would still be able to see their respective siblings.¹⁷³ Depending on the ship, sometimes private evacuees traveling in groups were assigned dormitories. Dennis Drew slept in a large room with eighty-one boys under the supervision of a “Scotsman who swore like a trouter”.¹⁷⁴ The boys slept in three-layered bunks constructed from steel tubing and canvas and hung by two chains. According to Drew, “these chains were often unhooked by “jokers”, causing the bed to come crashing down; hence one of the reasons for the aforementioned swearing”. CORB evacuee Maureen Burke and her two sisters were assigned a cabin of their own on the *Anselm* but this just meant that they “felt left out of the fun of the dormitory”.¹⁷⁵ Margaret Beal recorded in her diary that she was placed in “a teeny-weeny cabin” with Jeanne and two “very tiny girls” they had become acquainted with on their journey from Scarborough. That CORB escorts assigned them together in a cabin suggests that they wanted to try keep children familiar with each other together. CORB also often matched older evacuees with younger children so that they would have added supervision. Sometimes this meant that siblings were divided. Anne Mackinnon was separated from her sister and instead was put in charge of two little girls in a three-berth cabin.¹⁷⁶ This meant that elder girls would often help wash, entertain, and put younger children to bed. Margaret Beal even noted in her diary that one day she got up and did a lot of ironing for their group and even darned a sock for a boy.¹⁷⁷ All CORB children, under the supervision of their escorts, were supposed to mend and launder clothes.¹⁷⁸

Male evacuees do not discuss such peer care in their accounts. They do, however, record more physical aspects of the ship. Anthony Paish in a letter to his parents proudly recorded that the ship was “very nice” and that his cabin “number [was] 647”. Further describing the ship, Paish noted that there was a very big café on board and included a drawing of the ship, marking both the space where he was writing the letter and the

¹⁷³ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Grace Wilson née Blackman”.

¹⁷⁴ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Dennis Drew”

¹⁷⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Maureen Burke”.

¹⁷⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Anne Jeffrey nee Mackinnon”.

¹⁷⁷ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

¹⁷⁸ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

location of his cabin under the deck.¹⁷⁹ For Margaret Beal, the ship was not particularly big but it was nice and the true value of the ship lay in the fact that “there [were] a lot of nice boys aboard”.¹⁸⁰ The food on the ship provided a new and satisfying experience. For Laila Nardell from the East end of London, the food on board was very good and much grander than that to which she and her sister were accustomed. At home, according to Nardell, there had not been much spare food.¹⁸¹ Margaret Burt found going into a large dining room and have men serve them was a new experience.¹⁸² The elaborate menus and ability to choose what they ate was a novelty to Maureen Burke, so much so that she had the Captain sign her menu from the *Anselm* and kept it.¹⁸³ For CORB evacuees, mealtime sometimes became an entertainment event. Margaret Beal recorded in her diary that one night at dinner paper hats were given out and they ate turkey. She managed to eat two and half puddings and two ice creams. In addition to the abundant food that many evacuees had never experienced before, Margaret explained that “everybody got sort of silly because they had silly hats on and we had some grand fun”.¹⁸⁴ Another strange experience was having to set their watches back an hour each day as they crossed the Atlantic.¹⁸⁵

Ship life brought the evacuees other unusual and unique experiences. Washing brought its own challenge as baths were to be used only by the ship’s staff because there was a serious risk of scalding water.¹⁸⁶ Fresh water was a valuable resource so evacuees, both CORB and private, had to wash with salt water. When Catherine Anderson was given a bath in a free-standing tub using sea water, a bowl of fresh water was only provided for face washing and brief rinses.¹⁸⁷ The problem was that dried salt water on the skin, either from bathing or the natural ocean spray, becomes terribly itchy and

¹⁷⁹ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

¹⁸⁰ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

¹⁸¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Laila Nardell”.

¹⁸² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Burt Hamilton”.

¹⁸³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Maureen Burke”.

¹⁸⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

¹⁸⁵ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”. Elizabeth Paish wrote aboard the *Duchess of Atholl* of changing her watch. Evacuees who travelled to the other three Dominions crossed the equator that was often marked by escorts or crew with some festivity.

¹⁸⁶ TNA, MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, “Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees”.

¹⁸⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

irritating. Margaret Beal in her diary therefore marked the important occasion of washing her hair aboard describing, “It was a great relief to do it, as our hair was very salty and sticky”.¹⁸⁸ The ship was also a space to mingle with sailors and ship’s crew. According to one of Shakespeare’s speeches, “men of the merchant service took a lively interest in the children... the children enticed every variety of badge, button and emblem from the officers and men”. Evacuees became such little charges to the extent that sailors “helped to bath them, washed the girls’ hair, and even wet clothes were hung up to dry in the engine room”.¹⁸⁹ Sometimes interacting with sailors and other passengers presented stranger experiences. Veronica Owens, for instance, wrote to her parents “mid-Atlantic” that she had spoken to Charles, an old sailor on the ship who said that when she got to Canada she “mustn’t” forget the Old Country. Veronica reassured him that she would return as soon as the war was over to which he replied that if any of his children did not want to return, he would shoot them. This did not distress Veronica apparently, as she flippantly noted “he is a real patriotic old bird and is rather nice”.¹⁹⁰

Strict rules and safety guidelines that children had to adhere to while aboard also shaped their experience. Instead of gas masks, evacuees had to carry their lifejackets.¹⁹¹ Both private and CORB evacuees had to do daily lifeboat drills, which some boy evacuees remarked as quite exciting. Both children and escorts had to remember other safety precautions. The signal for an emergency was seven short blasts on the steam whistle after which one long blast would sound with the electric emergency hooters. On another ship, the signal was six short blasts and one long blast on the whistle, so it was important that each escort knew the safety arrangements for each ship. If there was an “abandon ship” order made by the Captain, escorts would lead their children to certain lifeboats and help them with their lifejackets. The Booth Steamship Company outlined emergency arrangements for the *Hilary* carrying CORB children and reminded escorts

¹⁸⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

¹⁸⁹ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Speeches and General Surveys”.

¹⁹⁰ IWM Documents, 134, “Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens”.

¹⁹¹ Catherine Anderson remembers “carrying lifejackets, heavy cumbersome over-the-head and tie on devices made of canvas, packed back and front with cork”. Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

that lifejacket strings had to be tied tightly at the front, especially important for children. The company suggested that if the child were quite small, it might be necessary to stuff a pillow case between their chest and the lifejacket because if the jacket were not done up tightly enough then there was a grave danger of the child “being throttled on getting into the water, or of having its neck broken if it falls into the water from any height”.¹⁹²

The ocean journey was not always smooth sailing; seasickness plagued both CORB and private evacuees’ journeys. Anthony Paish wrote to his parents that he was seasick seventeen times while fellow evacuee Josephine Robson was ill the whole journey.¹⁹³ As his brother suffered seasickness, David Hope kept a continuous letter to his parents on the journey and proudly mentioned with every entry “I am still not seasick”.¹⁹⁴ Evacuees who sailed on the *Oronsay* seemed to have a particularly bad bout of seasickness. Dorothy Pye and others were so ill on board that the escorts laid them outside on the deck on sand bags.¹⁹⁵ David Cornish also remembers being laid on the deck aboard the *Oronsay*. The ship may have had more ill children than normal due to its potent smell of fuel. Muriel Pitt recalls having to hold her nose to get to the dining room. Also aboard the *Oronsay* was Stella Bates who was equally ill. Escorts would try to take her to the dining room but as she made it down the hall the smell of engine oil would set her off vomiting again so would have to go back to the cabin.¹⁹⁶ Escorts did not only deal with seasickness, as some evacuees became ill with other ailments and required treatment. Margaret Burt Hamilton’s brother Peter started to run a temperature a few days after they embarked and was placed in the ship’s CORB children’s hospital. He eventually developed German measles and was placed in isolation.¹⁹⁷ In an attempt to see him, Margaret with her other brother and sister would meet and go to the deck to visit Peter. When caught, they were all severely reprimanded.

¹⁹² TNA, MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, “Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees”

¹⁹³ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Josephine Robson”.

¹⁹⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Gordon and David Hope”.

¹⁹⁵ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Dorohty Pye”.

¹⁹⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Stella Marion Bates nee Pickering”.

¹⁹⁷ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Maragert Burt Hamilton”.

To ensure the evacuees maintained religious observance, escorts and ministers aboard were tasked with providing pastoral care for the children. Private evacuees could attend services for passengers. Veronica Owens, in a letter to her parents, recorded that on Sunday they had a service in the dining room, with a psalm, a lesson, prayers, and three hymns.¹⁹⁸ CORB ensured that a priest of the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church, a Free Church minister, or a member of the Salvation Army was on board to conduct a children's service. In the worst case, an escort would be appointed to supervise the spiritual welfare of children who were of their own denomination.¹⁹⁹ For CORB evacuees like Grace Blackman, attending a church service on the ship became a memorable part of the experience.²⁰⁰

When evacuees were not suffering from sickness or participating in services, bathing, eating, or mending clothes, they were left with plenty of time to play. For CORB children, escorts organised games, concerts, parties, and lessons, and children sometimes produced even magazines.²⁰¹ CORB chose its escorts so that at least one would have knowledge of physical training and deck sports while another might have experience with children's games, competitions, music, or singing. Sometimes escorts even gave lessons about Canada and what sort of things they would encounter. Each ship was also stocked with sports, games, and toys for the evacuees and some even had cinemas with "appropriate films" and libraries. If those activities would not occupy the children then back-up stocks of pencils, paper, drawing-blocks, handicrafts, and song sheets were also included on the ships.²⁰² Comparatively, some private evacuees in groups received less supervision. Evacuees had to make their own entertainment. For Catherine Anderson's group that included a game called "keep the kettle boiling" which entailed sliding down the wide polished banister on the "stately" staircase down to the dining room. One

¹⁹⁸ IWM Documents, 134, "Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens".

¹⁹⁹ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Speeches and General Surveys".

²⁰⁰ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Grace Wilson née Blackman".

²⁰¹ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Speeches and General Surveys".

²⁰² TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

wonders how long the metaphorical kettle was indeed kept boiling before being stopped by an adult. By wandering around, Catherine found a children's nursery where a nanny permitted her to ride a rocking horse for as long as she wanted despite the fact that she was far too big for it.²⁰³

For others, the vast expanse of the ship acted as a space for mischief. General rules for children while on board the ships included not putting their heads out of port holes nor attempting to open or close ports nor climbing on the ship's rails.²⁰⁴ CORB evacuee Emily Macnab disregarded the regulation; her mother had sewn the birth certificates of her and her brother John into the lining of her coat for safekeeping. Curiosity got the better of her and she unpicked the stitching to have a look. The result was the loss of the important papers out of the porthole.²⁰⁵ Christine Bolus' incredibly mischievous brother Archie was once found hanging half-way out of a porthole and on another occasion, he walked into a cabin and helped himself to a box of chocolates.²⁰⁶ After being charged with his care, which was a lot to ask of a ten-year-old, Christine was relieved to finally reach Halifax. Children were also not permitted to leave their accommodation without instructions from their escorts nor were they allowed on the upper deck after dark nor at any time when winches and ropes were being handled on the upper deck such as when leaving landing stages.²⁰⁷ This regulation was ignored by one boy who disobeyed orders and was scalped by a hawser. The boy arrived safely in Canada and healed, but he was left somewhat bald.²⁰⁸ Geoffrey Habesch, an officer in the British merchant Navy, made a journey to Canada on a ship carrying evacuees. On one occasion, Habesch found a boy hanging outside of the ship on a piece of rope.²⁰⁹ Another boy, aged seven, decided that he would throw his lifejacket overboard just to see if it

²⁰³ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson".

²⁰⁴ TNA, MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, "Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees".

²⁰⁵ Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Macnab". Allegedly, Emily went the rest of her life using the wrong middle name, signing her name Emily Taylor instead of Emily Harvie.

²⁰⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Christine Bolus".

²⁰⁷ TNA, MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, "Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees".

²⁰⁸ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

²⁰⁹ IWM Interviews, 10304, Geoffrey Habesch, 1988.

would float.²¹⁰ However, that no significant incidents or accidents occurred on any ships carrying CORB children should be a credit to the escorts' level of care. One of the youngest evacuees to come to Canada as a private evacuee was Fabian Pease, just three years old yet "fabulously self-sufficient". As Philomena shared a cabin with Fabian she and the other children in the group would look after him. On one occasion, Fabian locked himself in the women's lavatory by accident but the space under the door was too small to retrieve him. Instead, a young girl was hoisted over the door as his saviour but was later upset over the experience; Fabian was not.²¹¹ On another occasion, Fabian was lost all together for hours; the tannoy even made announcements about a lost boy. Eventually he was found lying on the carpet in the first-class lounge happily singing to a group of portly gentlemen in arm chairs. According to Philomena "he liked to sing, and they evidently liked to hear him". Throughout it all, the children's health and even their rest had to be carefully monitored by the escorts while a myriad of other tasks (from mending the bottoms of trousers after too much sliding to ensuring that at a moment's notice, at any time of day, children were directed towards lifeboats with lifejackets) also fell on their shoulders.

For CORB evacuees, the boat journey also played a role in deciding to which province they would be allocated. It was also an opportunity to prepare the children for their Canadian lives that would lie ahead, and CORB files suggest that the journey was used as a chance to teach evacuee tips to help them adjust to a new world, and to give them an idea of their new lives.²¹² Through these talks and broadly during the whole journey, escorts were supposed to get to know the children and closely monitor their character and behaviour. Escorts tried make notes about the children's social background, adaptability, and any other factors that would affect the children's placement. From this, escorts would suggest children for provinces. This had an additional practical role as the Canadian conference had specified that each boat of children should be allocated to

²¹⁰ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Speeches and General Surveys".

²¹¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Fabian Pease".

²¹² TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

particular regions rather than distributing the children across all the provinces because that would require more personnel, resources, and planning.²¹³ If a child had been nominated to go to a particular home, that information would be collated on the boat so that it could be efficiently passed on during embarkation. In the thoughts of the Canadian Conference Committee, this process would mean that a lot of the important information “essential to the protection and happiness of the children” could be established during the voyage as opposed to during embarkation which would undoubtedly be more hurried. In the name of preparation, the day before landing in Halifax, David Cornish and twenty-four other children were taken to the dining room and informed that they were being sent to Prince Edward Island. Maps and even brochures of PEI were given to the children and their excitement grew.²¹⁴

As ocean voyages ended, evacuees sighted Canada for the very first time, with scenes that would be etched on their mind. Many evacuees first spotted icebergs, a Canadian sight promised to them by parents and teachers in Britain. Whilst crossing, ships in Thomas Richard’s convoy were attacked so the convoy dispersed and his ship went full speed to Newfoundland. As they sailed into St. John’s, Thomas described, “there in the harbour was an extraordinary sight...Newfoundland to us children seemed to be covered in blueberries which we had not seen before”.²¹⁵ For Catherine Anderson, her first memory is of sailing up the St. Lawrence and seeing the narrow fields coming down to the river”.²¹⁶ The ship stopped in Quebec City and people waved at them from the dockside. On the *Duchess of Richmond*, Tim Willis sailed into Montreal; for him, the unforgettable colour of the leaves whilst sailing up the St. Lawrence River was his first memory of Canada. For those landing in Halifax, it was no less impressive. Gordon Hope wrote to his parents that they sighted the coast of Nova Scotia in the morning, stayed in Halifax harbour overnight, and the next day saw terribly thick fog.²¹⁷ John Hughes

²¹³ MG20-E256, “Charlotte Whitton Fonds”.

²¹⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “David Cornish”.

²¹⁵ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Richard Thomas”.

²¹⁶ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

²¹⁷ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Gordon Hope”.

simply marveled at the city lights of Halifax, something evacuees had not seen since the start of blackouts.²¹⁸

Once the evacuees' ship docked at either Halifax or Montreal, the children had to disembark, be processed and organised, and boarded onto trains destined for their final destinations. The evacuees' arrival symbolically marked the beginning of Canada's responsibility as host country. Despite this and the fact that the majority of evacuees subsequently had to endure an almost equally lengthy transcontinental train journey that required careful planning and care, historians have overlooked this aspect of evacuation. For evacuees, arrival at port meant hurried preparations to disembark. As Margaret Seagrief prepared to get off at Halifax she remembered that she had no present to give her aunt who was hosting her in Toronto so stole a fish knife from the ship.²¹⁹ Fifteen days after leaving her home in Scarborough, Margaret Beal arrived in Halifax on August 19, 1940 and recorded in her diary that they had to rush to get off the boat, even putting half-dry clothes into their cases.²²⁰ But before the evacuees could come ashore, Canadian Immigration officials boarded the ships and checked individual records against the nominal rolls for the children. For CORB children, listed beside their name on the nominal roll were the child's final provincial destination. The chief escorts for the group would then hand over to the Immigration Authorities not only the nominal roll but also the children's history files, medical reports, and Canadian Immigration questionnaire, all in triplicate. Thus the Canadian records for each children were opened and would be maintained throughout the war. As the chief escorts handed over these files, escorts had a chance to notify the authorities if any non-nominated children had formed connections or attachments to children who would be sent to nominated homes. In cases where the children hoped to stay close together, escorts could place the records of the two children in the same bundle in an attempt to place the children in the same vicinity. The children were then finally brought to shore and directed to the immigration building where their

²¹⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "John Hughes".

²¹⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Watson nee Seagrief". She apparently "asked God to forgive her theft because it was important to her that she bring a welcoming gift"

²²⁰ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Smolenski nee Beal".

luggage would be taken first to the customs shed and then forwarded on. For that reason, children had to depart the ship with their rucksacks packed with enough daily essentials to last three days.²²¹ While they waited, CORB children were given milk and cookies to keep them going.²²²

CORB children were subsequently put into a queue and examined by the Dominion medical authorities so that children with ailments could be identified and segregated.²²³ Any sick child would be placed in hospital and any infested child (although this was monitored aboard the ship) would be deloused and bathed.²²⁴ Dorothy Pye's medical inspection upon arrival showed a tubercular scar on her x-rays.²²⁵ Consequently, she was kept in Halifax until the doctors decided that the scar was six years old and was of no danger. Only then was she allowed to board the train. From the doctor, the children would then move to an Immigration official who would ask for the CORB number and call the number (rather than the child's name) to another official who would then cross-reference the number on the nominal roll and would announce the province to which the child would be allocated. The children were then guided to benches reserved for each province and it was there that they would be passed off by British escorts to Canadian escorts, or "conductresses" as they were known in Canada, who would then confirm all the children's names for their groups. This moment signified the end of the first part of the children's journeys and the transfer of care from British to Canadian authorities. Now under the care of Canadians (who had accents that the children had to try to understand), the children not only had to say goodbye to their escorts who had cared for them on the lengthy and bewildering Atlantic journey but also to their new friends made aboard the ship. The children would remain in these groups until they reached the provincial distribution centres.²²⁶

²²¹ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

²²² John Hughes recalls hot chocolate and cookies while Margaret Beal remembers milk and biscuits. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "John Hughes".

²²³ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

²²⁴ MG20-E256, "Charlotte Whitton Fonds".

²²⁵ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Dorothy Pye".

²²⁶ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Reception Arrangements".

Canadian authorities worked to ensure the system of disembarkation was organised and straightforward. Yet, to one outsider, Lady Constance Mayo-Robson, the arrangements made for the arrival of the *Antonia* were less than suitable. In a letter to R. Keith Jopson, Liaison Officer between the British and the Canadian governments, on August 22, 1940, Mayo-Robson wrote of being “horried at the utter misery suffered by the [300] children at Halifax, after such a wonderful journey”.²²⁷ According to her, the children had arrived at Halifax but had only one hour to wait before leaving for Montreal, which meant they were unable to wait for their supper; yet instead they had had to wait until 1.20am to depart after having sat in sheds until a train appeared. Mayo-Robson continued that the British escorts had been prohibited from contacting the Canadian escorts and were even told that all the escorts’ notes on the children would be “thrown through the windows, and the man in control said he could not guarantee any of the children’s destination – even to relations!!” She then wrote that “brothers and sisters were separated and sent to different places, and they were all weeping!!” and estimated that the “appalling, cruel and inhuman” experience would “undoubtedly affect them and their relations at home” Four days later, Mayo-Robson wrote again but this time apologised for writing “so abruptly” and included a letter “of adjustment” which contained some constructive suggestions like preparing a children’s reception area at each port.²²⁸ In reply to this serious complaint, Jopson wrote a memo on August 31 to the High Commissioner explaining that Lady Mayo-Robson’s complaints could not have been based on her own first-hand experience because no private individuals were permitted to enter the Immigration Hall nor the station platform.²²⁹ Nonetheless, the matter was taken quite seriously as discussions and a “post-mortem” within the Canadian government went on until September 9. This was mostly because the letter was forwarded to Princess Alice but also because it exposed a critical error in arranging the evacuees’ arrivals. Officials had been notified that the *Antonia* would be docking at Quebec yet just only eighteen

²²⁷ TNA, DO 131/48, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Immigration Proceedure established by Canadian Authorities”.

²²⁸ TNA, DO 131/48, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Immigration Proceedure established by Canadian Authorities”.

²²⁹ There is no record of May-Robson as a passenger on any ship at the time. If she was, it may suggest that she had access. This it seems was not the case.

hours later, the ship showed up in the Halifax harbour. This left Canadian National Railway officials scrambling to make emergency arrangements to transport the children from Halifax to Montreal. Escorts brought in to greet the next ship, the *Duchess of York*, were drafted in and all available staff worked around the clock to sort the children and their luggage. According to this post-mortem report, the whole incident was a mess that tested everyone's ability to react in a time of emergency. After much discussion, the matter was settled; the children eventually arrived in Montreal and it was subsequently suggested that chief escorts send a message to the Immigration officer in Canada with a rough arrival time.²³⁰

While Lady Mayo-Robson perhaps had thought this process was troublesome, others like CORB escort Edith Gowans felt compelled to write to CORB with a report of her opinions of the whole journey experience. She claimed the journey had had its difficult moments but overall was successful. On Sunday, August 3, 1940, Gowans wrote to Miss Maxse from the Nova Scotian Hotel in Halifax to express her opinion that although it was a "somewhat strenuous trip" the children behaved marvellously. She explained that after a little seasickness on route "they all with the exception of Martin Parry reached land in excellent health and spirits". According to Gowans, Martin had not been very well during the last week and then on the morning of landing his temperature ran up alarmingly and acute tonsillitis developed. He was promptly admitted to the Children's Hospital in Halifax where he began responding well to treatment. After explaining that part of the group had left for Toronto while the other part would be shortly following, Gowans concluded by saying that the children were "all happy and already much in love with Canada and the wonderful welcome they have received".²³¹ Margaret Beal was another evacuee on board the ship; her diary records that packing up their bags was indeed a rush and they had in fact missed dinner. Not aware of the full

²³⁰ TNA, DO 131/48, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Immigration Proceedure established by Canadian Authorities".

²³¹ TNA, DO 131/75, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Gowans, Edith".

confusion surrounding their arrival, Margaret simply recorded that they “were very tired when [they] finally got onto the train and undressed and went to bed”.²³²

Once the evacuees had passed through the immigration buildings upon their arrival at a Canadian port, the full responsibility for their care was passed to Canadians. At the port, the Canadian Red Cross tried to greet each evacuee with a package for their train journey. Each contained a cake of soap (as there was only liquid soap on the trains), a towel (as there were only paper towels on the train), a face flannel, a book, toys, and some type of handiwork, generally needlework for the girls and a drawing or tracing book for the boys. A supply of Glucose “D” tablets, a variety of sweets, and a brilliantly brightly coloured handkerchief with a “noble and romantic effigy of a trooper of the Canadian Mounted Police” were also included in the packages.²³³ As Britain paid for the evacuees’ boat passages, Canada footed the bill for their train fares. With their new Canadian conductresses leading the way, the children immediately set off for their new provinces. Swiftly moving on to the next part of their journey was unique for evacuees in Canada; in the other Dominions, evacuees stayed at hostels for a few days so they could be sorted. In New Zealand, the children’s escorts from Britain even travelled with them all the way to their foster homes. Nonetheless, the newly arrived evacuees ventured off on trains to provincial distribution centres in cities such as Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Truro.²³⁴

The railway journey was certainly not the most luxurious part of the journey, especially for those travelling out to British Columbia from Halifax as this would take days. With their conductresses, the children were put onto “Colonist” cars which were traditionally used for the transportation of new immigrants to Canada. Jopson had written to CORB on August 19, 1940 to explain the use of these railcars albeit with hesitation due to the limited comfort of the “colonist” cars. He explained that the seats were thinly upholstered with a hard leather covering and were arranged on either side of the car. The

²³² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

²³³ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Reception Arrangements”.

²³⁴ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

floors had no covering and there were certainly “no frills” about the car. However, at night the seats would fold down horizontally to become beds while upper berths pulled down from the roof like shelves and there were adequate lavatory and washing units in each car. Each child was given two blankets but there would not be any usable pillows because pillows were hard to clean whereas blankets could be fumigated and cleaned after each trip; according to Jopson, children would have to use a rolled up coat or sacrifice one blanket. What exacerbated an already uncomfortable train journey was that the cars were not air-conditioned even though summer rail travel across Canada would be hot and dusty.²³⁵ Jopson reassured CORB, however, that the Canadian authorities were trying to improve the situation but there were no other alternatives due to the military demands on rail transportation. Yet just as with the sea voyage, there were some instances where provisions needed improving, as Jopson noted that the Immigration Authorities had admitted that the transportation provided for *Anselm* children “left much to be desired in the way of cleanliness”. To remedy this, plans were made to service cars at stations during the trip or to transfer the children to fresh cars. By August 19, Jopson reported to CORB that new arrangements with the Canadian National Railways meant that children would travel in “tourist” cars rather than “colonist” cars whenever possible.

The lengthy train journeys required provisions for feeding the children which Canadian authorities set to organising. In co-operation with the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and the Immigration branch, arrangements were made to include a cook on each train who would prepare meals in a separate car and then bring them to the children in their coaches.²³⁶ As early as July 2, 1940 as expressed in a letter to F. C. Blair, the railways had agreed to serve the children at the rate of 50 cents per meal, per child because they were “anxious to provide this service at the lowest possible cost to the Government”. The two railways even included sample menus for the children which for breakfast would include oatmeal or dry cereal, two slices of bacon, bread and butter, jam or marmalade, tea or milk; the mid-day meal

²³⁵ TNA, DO 131/ 45, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Reception and Arrangements”.

²³⁶ TNA, DO 131/ 45, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Reception and Arrangements”.

would include beef broth with barley, minced beef, mashed potatoes, sago pudding with cream sauce, buttered bread, tea or milk; the evening meal could consist of consommé, scrambled eggs, buttered bread, milk pudding, jam, tea or milk.²³⁷ Even on their train journey, the children were already enjoying full meals that would have been more limited back in Britain. Yet this new food no doubt caused some upset stomachs. For this reason and due to the length of the journeys it was important to ensure that medical assistance would be available throughout the trip, much like on the boat voyage. One nurse was assigned to every five cars (or approximately fifty people) and one conductress was assigned to each car to deal with all sorts of issues from bouts of homesickness and travel sickness to bouts of boredom.²³⁸ Medical kits were provided on each trip and doctors would board the trains to provide medical attention along the way when the trains arrived at Moncton, Saint John, Campbellton, Lévis, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, Capreol, Sudbury, Fort William, Armstrong, Winnipeg, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Kamloops, and Vancouver. Just before arriving at the distribution centres, individuals would board the trains to become familiar with the groups in order to handle them upon arrival at the centre.²³⁹

Although long and boring, these lengthy cross-country train journeys gave evacuees a unique opportunity to view the Canadian landscape, particularly as it became varied westwards. David Cornish found everything in Canada new and very exhilarating; the trains and cars were “BIG” and everyone was so friendly, according to David. On the train to Charlottetown, people chatted and welcome the children at each stop and local children on bikes even followed the train from the stations. Margaret Beal recorded in her diary the landscape on the journey to Winnipeg: “We are passing a lot of water and we have just seen a lot of wood logs in a lake. There is wood, wood, everywhere and all the houses are made of it. Over the other side of the water, there are big pine woods, with a few deciduous trees”. Travelling through Quebec, Margaret remarked on seeing all the twinkling light across the water which “all looked very beautiful”. It also brought the new experience of passing through a French-speaking town as boys passed the carriage and

²³⁷ LAC, RG76-I-A-1, Immigration Branch, “Vol: 438- 439”.

²³⁸ LAC, MG20-E256, “Charlotte Whitton Fonds”.

²³⁹ LAC, MG20-E256, “Charlotte Whitton Fonds”.

Margaret's friend asked "do you speak English?" to which they laughed and said "non". Evacuees met not only French Canadians on their journey. Margaret also recorded people waving to the evacuees as they passed and talking to them when stopped at stations, even giving them presents, sweets, and in one instance, six peaches.²⁴⁰ In strange coincidence, Margaret noted that they were "always seeing soldiers" and would talk to them when their trains drew alongside. The soldiers similarly gave the children sweets and small items and when their train pulled away they would, according to Margaret, "stick their thumbs up"; the evacuees did the same. This small gesture signified some hint of a shared camaraderie; the children had just escaped Britain whilst the soldiers were heading there. Both had an idea of what would lay before the other once they both arrived.

Private evacuees went through similar customs and immigration checks as CORB children. Hosts or representatives at the port met some private evacuees once they passed immigration authorities. The English Electric Company group was met in Halifax by Mrs. H. C. Blenkhorn, the wife of the English Electric Company Assistant General Manager, and Mrs. A. J. Bennett, the wife of a Toronto representative of the company.²⁴¹ Under the careful eye of the two women, the children traveled by train to St. Catharines, Ontario. The University of Toronto's Women's War Service Committee similarly sent representatives to ports and even took out insurance to cover the person collecting the children's valuables.²⁴² Some evacuees were met by their foster parents at the port. Patricia and Colin Cave's foster mother Marion traveled from Toronto to Halifax to collect the children. On July 14, 1940 she wrote to their parents to explain that she had arrived early to ensure that she would be there for them even though all the ships were running late because of zig-zagging across the ocean. She further explained that the children had a 1200-mile rail journey to Toronto but reassured them that that she had reserved accommodation and that the train was air conditioned and the dining car had excellent food. The uncertainty of ship arrivals made this an organisational difficulty for the private evacuees as well. Some private evacuees travelling individually had to

²⁴⁰ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Smolenski nee Beal".

²⁴¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Audrey Scholes nee Buxton".

²⁴² UOTA, B1968-0002, "University of Toronto, Women's War Service Committee".

navigate the experience with less personal guidance; they had to board trains themselves and then Canadian railway officials took charge of unattended children until they reached their final destination.²⁴³

Julie Kemp received quite unusual treatment as her foster parents arranged for colleagues in the Bank of Montreal to help with her transportation across Canada. Five-year-old Julie had a unique journey as the only paying passenger aboard the *Pacific Pioneer*.²⁴⁴ Rather than Halifax or Montreal, the ship arrived in Saint John, New Brunswick. Her journey to British Columbia resembled a game of pass-the-parcel as her foster father utilised professional connections to organise Julie's transportation across the country. From Saint John, Julie was met and put on a train to Montreal by a G. Lawson who notified her foster father by cable. On the train, Julie was put under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Monsell who were travelling to Montreal. In Montreal Sammy Lawrence, an employee of the head office at the Bank of Montreal who happened to know the Monsells personally, took over responsibility for Julie. Julie was then due to take a Trans-Canada airline flight to Vancouver but due to a plane delay, Julie remained in Montreal for two days although Lawrence wrote this "did Julie the world of good as it gave her a chance to get her land legs back again!" Mrs. Monsell took care of Julie as Lawrence's wife and daughter were out of town. When the time came, Monsell saw Julie off at the airport; a friend on the same plane promised to look after her until Calgary. Everyone took a liking to Julie as Lawrence wrote that Monsell "would dearly have loved to keep her here" and asked for her parents' address to tell them "what a good little lady Julia was". Lawrence also offered his help when Julie returned home after the war. In Vancouver, Julie was met by the Harpers who noted that Julie arrived "not only in perfect health but in perfect composure". From Vancouver, the Harpers arranged for their acquaintance Mrs. McKenna, who was traveling to Penticton with her four young children, to take Julie under her wing. Like Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Harper wrote "please tell Mr. Kemp that our only regret is that his beautiful daughter is not to stay with us for the duration".²⁴⁵

²⁴³ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

²⁴⁴ Ancestry passenger lists show her to be its only passenger.

²⁴⁵ IWM Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

Subsequently, Mrs. Monsell, who was an agent in the “foreign department” in Montreal, wrote a letter to Julie’s parents which included some photographs of Julie. Mrs. Monsell then wrote “If she is not happy in her new home just drop us a line and we will be delighted to have her. My son Harley fell quite in love with her and insisted that we should keep her. Well in closing let me say that you have one of the dearest children I have ever met, and these remarks were passed by all who met her. If you ever come to Montreal be sure and look us up”.²⁴⁶ Julie eventually arrived in Penticton to stay with the Matsons. Professional connections of her foster father enabled Julie to be transported and cared for on her journey from one side of Canada to the other. Along the way, she was feted but Canadians were also willing to take charge of the child out of their own kindness. As evacuees were easily recognised as British children, Canadians throughout various stages of both CORB and private evacuees’ journeys displayed acts of kindness.

As evacuees arrived on Canadian shores, the federal government thought it best to establish a committee to oversee their care. In August 13, 1940, by an Order in Council, PC 3869, the Immigrant Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources established the National Advisory Committee for Children from Overseas to facilitate the general administration of the evacuation scheme, administer necessary funds, and to “advise the Minister of Mines and Resources on all matters relating to the care and welfare of children evacuated to the Dominion from the United Kingdom”.²⁴⁷ The Committee, headquartered in Ottawa, consisted of government officials such as Thomas A. Crerar, the Minister of Mines and Resources for Canada, Sir Gerald Campbell, High Commissioner for Great Britain, R. Keith Jopson, Liaison Officer between the British and the Canadian Governments, and Frederick C. Blair and Dr. George F. Davidson, as consultants from the Immigration Branch, along with representatives from each Canadian province. The idea for the committee was originally proposed by the “Possible Movement of Child Refugees and Evacuees to Canada” in June 1940. As CORB children

²⁴⁶ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”. It is unclear which “foreign department” this was and his position within it.

²⁴⁷ The establishment of the committee was deemed important enough for its members to pose for a photograph on the steps of the House of Commons. TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

finally began arriving in early August, there was a need for an over-arching national committee. The minutes of the first meeting on August 13 and clearly stated that “as the Federal Government had a responsibility to the British Government under the arrangements agreed upon between them, it became necessary that the Federal Government be in a position to know fully, through Mr. Crerar, just what is being done. Childcare had always been the jurisdiction of provincial authorities in Canada so the “Federal Government could not well go into the provincial field to interfere”.²⁴⁸ The advisory board, as the federal representation, would sit at the top of the three-tiered system agreed upon for caring for the children. This potential tension of “divided authority” was also represented by the committee’s concern over the collection of funds as it would be automatically filtered into the national fund. It was thought that people would feel more comfortable donating money if there was some indication that there was a degree of provincial or local control over its distribution. It was imperative that representatives from each province be included in the committee not only because the provinces had offered their co-operation for the cause but because it was important that agreements between the government of Canada and the governments of the provinces should be established to settle, as much as possible, the responsibilities of each government in regards to the placement, care, and welfare of the children.²⁴⁹

The Advisory Committee, on behalf of the federal government, had the authority to pay for all of the costs and charges incurred by the provinces (charged against the *War Appropriation Act, 1940*), appoint additional employees and offices that might be needed, and acquire land and buildings for the use of the Committee or the children. Another crucial need for the Committee, as described in the minutes from its first meeting, was that children had begun arriving in Canada who were not otherwise under the official assisted CORB scheme and therefore “may require some protection and care”.²⁵⁰ The Advisory Committee would therefore be the national supervisory board for the reception

²⁴⁸ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Reception Arrangements”.

²⁴⁹ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Reception Arrangements”.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

of evacuees in Canada. Canada was crafting its own way of organising the reception of evacuee children. This was despite the idea that the Canadian organisation should mirror, to some extent, CORB. The United Kingdom High Commissioner in Canada in July had received a telegram from the Under-Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs suggesting that the body established in Canada should bear the same name as the British board. Canada did not adhere to the suggestion and instead chose its own name, another expression of Canada's decision to make its own policy.

It was on August 2, 1940 that the first boat carrying CORB evacuees arrived at Halifax. The *Anselm* was not only the first boat to arrive in Canada but was the first ship to depart Britain carrying CORB children. Canada therefore had the special honour of being the first recipient of Britain's children. By that time, nineteen ships had already arrived since June 2, 1940 carrying private evacuees.²⁵¹ The month of August would see eleven ships with private evacuees and five ships carrying CORB children arrive safely. (Figure 2) Despite the shortages in shipping, CORB was doing its best to process and transport the thousands of children who had been accepted by the time CORB applications were halted by the British government. On August 31, the *Volendam* just two days out of port, was struck by a U-boat torpedo. Fortunately, all the passengers were rescued and not a single CORB child was lost. It did, however, boldly and poignantly illustrate the risks British parents were taking by sending their children into dangerous Atlantic waters.

Canadians labeled the event as despicable and used it as an opportunity to reinforce ideas of German barbarity with headlines reading "'Like Hitler' To Torpedo Children".²⁵² The tragedy made CORB, the government and British parents wary but ships continued to depart. Nine-year-old Beryl Myatt was travelling to Winnipeg to stay with her great-aunt and uncle.²⁵³ Due to the poor communication of ship arrivals, secrecy, and unreliable shipping, Beryl's aunt wrote to her mother on August 27, 1940

²⁵¹ LAC, RG 26, Immigration Branch, "Vol 16: Statistical Tabulations".

²⁵² "'Like Hitler' To Torpedo Children", *Halifax Chronicle*, September 2, 1940.

²⁵³ IWM Documents, 5973, "Private Papers of Miss B Myatt".

that they were checking trains to see if she had arrived. On September 21, Beryl's mother asked her aunt if she would let them know if Beryl had overcome any homesickness and for them to find a local juvenile lending library nearby because of her love of reading. On the same day, she wrote to Beryl that they thought she would be surprised that her Dandy comics and sunny stories were waiting for her in Canada. She also reminded her daughter to "help auntie with her housework and her baking and above all dear, keep your bedroom tidy". She closed the letter with "tones of love and heaps of kisses". Little did she know that Beryl had already perished at sea four days earlier when her ship the *City of Benares* was torpedoed. The ship had departed on the fateful Friday, September 13, and just four days later, just off the coast of Ireland, the ship was attacked by a German U-boat, claiming the lives of seventy-seven of the ninety CORB children and six of their escorts.²⁵⁴ The news only broke on September 23, 1940. On October 2, CORB wrote to Beryl's parents explaining that they were unable to drop a wreath on the spot of the sinking because of the unknown path. Instead, CORB suggested, "you will have to try to think of the whole sea as poor little Beryl's grave. She belongs to a very gallant company of people whose grave is the sea".²⁵⁵

The news enraged Britons and Canadians alike.²⁵⁶ One evacuee's mother, Edith Rowlands, wrote to Mr. Blois "we were all disgusted here over the sinking of all those children on their way out. What a wicked thing to do, it only makes us more bitter we shall fight all the harder, this man will have to be put down and kept down, we women wish we could get a hold of Hitler, he would cry for mercy but get none".²⁵⁷ The British government

²⁵⁴ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

²⁵⁵ The Myatt collection at the IWM also includes a mourning card and items such as a ration card and an Odeon card what belonged to her. Her parents donated 10/- in her memory to the National Children's Home and Orphanage in London. A sympathy card reflects the lifelong guilt that Beryl's parents would feel as someone wrote "you've only done what you thought was for the best. So now please try and be brave. I feel for you as if she were my own". IWM, Documents, 5973, "Private Papers of Miss B Myatt".

²⁵⁶ There are now stories emerging of all the individuals who had a "close brush with death" and missed the Benares. Lois Davidson's cousin Vincent Holman was supposed to be on board the Benares but at the last minute, his papers were not in order so he was booked on to the next ship. Author's Evacuee Collection, "Lois Davidson". Peter Wilde and his brother were on the train to Liverpool but it was delayed and upon arrival, there was an air raid so they had to seek shelter. This made them miss their boat; --- the Benares. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Peter Wilde".

²⁵⁷ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Canada, Reception, Nova Scotia".

decided to suspend CORB and three ships carrying evacuees (the *Nerissa*, *Nova Scotia*, and *Newfoundland*) were recalled to ports immediately.²⁵⁸ The Dominions were notified that they would not, for the time being, receive any more CORB evacuees and therefore, the full extent of their generous offers would not be reached. Thousands of children who had been selected for evacuation would never leave Britain for Canadian shores. In total, across nine ships, Canada had received 1,532 children while Australia received 577 (in three parties), South Africa 353 in two parties, and 202 children had landed in New Zealand in two parties. The CORB staff, which at its peak included 620 people and apart from a small group who would still maintain contacts with children and their parents, was disbanded.²⁵⁹ Just twelve additional ships carrying just twenty-seven private evacuees arrived in Canada between September and December 1940.²⁶⁰

After all the debates, planning, and effort, the CORB and private evacuation of British children to Canada was over. The *City of Benares* tragedy, as could be expected, halted evacuation. Yet this should not be perceived as a failure of the scheme. Rather, it illustrates that within just a few months the British and Canadian governments successfully collaborated and produced an unprecedented transnational child migration scheme. To reach this level of functionality, both CORB and private evacuation drew on vast governmental, organisational, and individual networks and resources across both countries. The extensive transportation and safety arrangements represent the high level of care that authorities attempted to provide. This level of care was extended to the special selection of children who were to be evacuees. CORB was able to select ethnically, religiously, medically, emotionally, and socially suitable children whom they deemed to be fit for evacuation. Individual Canadians, schools, organisations, and businesses, by extending offers of care to particular children, also by virtue, selected those children whom they wished to help. As much as Canadians exercised altruism,

²⁵⁸ MT 9/3324, Transport Ministries, "Evacuation: Medical and safety arrangements on ships sailing from the UK with child evacuees".

²⁵⁹ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

²⁶⁰ LAC, RG 26, Immigration Branch, "Vol 16: Statistical Tabulations".

evacuation was extended to the *right* kind of children. For those children, their journey across the Atlantic was not only a new experience but became the beginning of their evacuation narrative while their transcontinental rail voyage provided their first glimpses of Canada. Canada however would never receive the 10,000 children Canadians had hoped for. As the trickle of evacuees stopped, Canadians instead used the opportunity to rededicate themselves to those children who had safely arrived. Ensuring that evacuees were well cared for and enjoyed their time in Canada became the goal for Canadian authorities and those who were to become foster-parents. Placing the children in foster homes would be the ultimate test.

Chapter Three

Falling in With the Family: The Private Lives of Evacuees

If only they know [sic] what joy these children bring to the house. I have never worked so hard in my life nor been so tired as I have been this year but I can truthfully say I have never been so happy before.¹

In 1941, one foster mother wrote to the University of Toronto Committee to express her experience of caring for an evacuee. Although fostering an evacuee came with its own set of challenges, many also spoke of the great benefits. Over the course of the war, many foster parents truly came to feel that their evacuee/s had become part of the family. The evacuees' experiences in Canadian homes was the primary factor in their ability to acclimatise to life in Canada. The limited historiography on evacuees in Canada has failed to examine critically the experiences of evacuees in their foster homes. One reason for this is that historians such as Geoffrey Bilson rely on the experiences of a few children. Whilst this enables a long view of their individual experiences, it not only privileges the few but does nothing to investigate larger questions about the children's care and experiences. Another reason, which plagues Penny Starns' book chapter, is that there has been little evidence to reconstruct evacuees' home lives. Through the database, this chapter maps the children's experiences with a new quantitative and thematic approach. This chapter draws on the concept of the private space to frame the evacuees' experience in Canada innovatively, starting with their placements in foster homes. The placement of CORB evacuees was thorough and even included an application process for potential foster parents.² This chapter questions whether children placed in nominated homes had a better experience than those matched with unnominated foster families and whether private evacuees had a better experience than CORB children. Once placed in

¹ TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Offer from the University of Toronto".

² In her doctoral thesis on Barnardo's children, Joy Parr argued that children were placed in foster homes based on "economic criteria" instead of their emotional or physical wellbeing. Joy Parr, "The Home Children: British Juvenile Immigration to Canada, 1868-1924," PhD diss., Yale University, 1977. Also see, Joy Parr, *Labouring Children* (London: Croom Helm, 1980): 11-14. Placements for evacuees were made on very different terms, and certainly not for economic reasons.

initial foster families, children's experiences are examined through their home lives, the impact of the relationships between foster parents and their biological parents on their lives in Canada, the ways that evacuees maintained connections to home, the Canadian authorities' monitoring of their placements and consequential re-placements, and their emotional and physical health while in Canada. Even though the method of placement for CORB and private evacuees differed, the children shared some common experiences within the private space. Ultimately, this chapter argues that the care that Canada and Canadians provided for evacuees made their wartime experience vastly different from those of domestic evacuees in Britain, now shaped by claims of abuse and trauma.

By the time CORB was suspended indefinitely in October 1940, 1,532 children had arrived in Canada under the scheme. By the end of December 1940, in total 1,655 private evacuees had arrived and were registered as unaccompanied British children.³ By collating CORB statistics and the statistics provided from the Immigration Branch of the Canadian government, the total number of British children who arrived in Canada without family members was 3,187. CORB children were distributed across Canada at the following rate: Ontario, 607; British Columbia, 207; Manitoba, 167; Nova Scotia, 145; Quebec, 136; Alberta, 107; Saskatchewan, 102; New Brunswick, thirty-one; Prince Edward Island, twenty-five.⁴ (Figure 3) As Canada's population was 11.3 million in 1939, one CORB evacuee was received for every 7386 Canadians.⁵ This ratio would be higher if private evacuees were included in the statistics. CORB statistics can be further broken down. Calculating the percentage of each province's population in 1939 and the percentage of children each province accepted reveals which provinces took "their fair share" of evacuees. These calculations show that Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island took more than their fair share of evacuees. PEI,

³ LAC, RG 26, Immigration Branch, "Vol 16: Statistical Tabulations". These numbers again, are widely overestimated by historians. *Invisible Immigrants*, the authors claim that the number of evacuees was "some 3,000 through an official government scheme and 10,000 privately". Marilyn Barber and Murray Watson, *Invisible Immigrants* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), 19.

⁴ Author's Evacuee Database. Five evacuees do not have province listed

⁵ Canada's Population in 1939. Canada Yearbook, 1940, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1940).

for instance, took double its proportion of evacuees. British Columbia had a high level of participation with one evacuee for every 3,739 people. If Canadian authorities had simply allocated the children so that each province would receive the same number of evacuees, these numbers might have been different. Alberta was the only province to receive an exactly proportional number of evacuees while Saskatchewan almost received an equal proportion. Quebec and New Brunswick received a number of evacuees that was far below their provincial proportion. (Figure 4) This proves that Canadian authorities did not divide equally evacuees across the provinces. Distributions were also dependent to some extent upon offers made by provinces. Canadian authorities had pledged to place children in homes that were culturally similar to their own. Quebec and New Brunswick took less than their fair share. A commonality between Quebec and New Brunswick is that both had significant Francophone populations. These statistics suggest that Canadian authorities were either hesitant to place children in homes where they would have to learn a new language or that the populations in both provinces made proportionally fewer offers to accommodate the children. In the initial discussions over evacuation at the Canadian Conference in June 1940, Quebec had expressed its willingness to take refugee children from France. It could also have been a mixture of both. Examining the numbers of nominated and unnominated homes across each province and the distribution of evacuees in major cities will reveal more. Canadian authorities decided upon provincial distribution at the ports of arrival, and to an extent on board the ship. Children had to be distributed despite the uncertainty of when ships would arrive and how many children each ship would be carrying. That Canadian authorities were able to achieve even some proportional provincial distribution is an impressive accomplishment.

The database reveals the origins of CORB evacuees, arranged by region, information that evacuees literature has been unable to provide. (Figure 5) Due to domestic evacuation as part of Operation Pied Piper, the common perception is that most evacuees came from London, England. When each CORB child's hometown is recorded however, it is clear that of the 1,532 evacuees who came to Canada, 354 were from northeastern England. The second largest group of evacuees came from London (349) while the third largest group was from Scotland (228). (Figure 6) Such data reveals which areas of Britain were perceived both by the British government and CORB to be most at

risk. Many CORB children ha from areas on the coast, from towns near large factories, from industrial centres, and shipyard towns. Plotting the hometowns of CORB evacuees clearly illustrates this trend. Scotland is an interesting example as it reveals that children came not only from the big cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh but also from coastal towns that were evidently perceived to be at risk of either bombing or a possible German invasion from the North Sea. (Figure 7) This map even shows that two children, George and Ronald Davison, came from Lerwick, the major port for the Shetland Islands which is 160 kilometres from the north coast of the mainland.⁶ (Figure 8) A map of southern England shows that most children came from Greater London area. (Figure 9) Yet the noticeable void around the East End in areas like Poplar is significant. (Figure 10) Although CORB claimed that it was open to all social classes, CORB children were evidently not selected from these traditionally working-class and poverty-stricken areas. Furthermore, CORB wanted to avoid taking large groups of children from one area on each ship. Perhaps this was to enable children from different areas to share the evacuation experience, or perhaps it was to avoid a potential disaster should children from just one area be lost in the event of a ship being torpedoed. The database reveals this policy was not always upheld; the first ship to leave Britain, the *Anselm*, collected seventy-eight children who were living in the northeast of England.⁷ By the time the second ship, the *Hilary*, sailed for Canada, its ninety-one CORB evacuees came from London, north west, north east, south east, and Yorkshire and the Humber region.⁸ Despite this, the Canadian policy that groups of unnominated children should not be unnecessarily distributed to various provinces meant that children from the same areas in Britain were often transported to similar areas in Canada. Of the seventy-eight children aboard the *Anselm*, thirty four (44%) went to nominated homes.⁹ 44 children went to unnominated homes and were sent to British Columbia (five), New Brunswick (three), Nova Scotia (twenty-

⁶ Author's Evacuee Database.

⁷ One child, Beverly Bruce was from West Wickham, London and sailed with the group. It is unclear why she was taken on but she may have been a "surplus" child who was kept in reserve in case another child did not show up for evacuation

⁸ Author's Evacuee Database.

⁹ Nominated children aboard the *Anselm* went to homes in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan.

seven), Ontario (eight), and Saskatchewan (one). All of the children sent to Nova Scotia were from Middlesbrough in North East England. Twenty-seven children in one group of similar size would have traveled to distribution centres together. Although they may not have known each other prior to their evacuation, the children experienced a familiarity with their peers through a common accent and family background. On the other hand, when children from various parts of Britain met on ships like the *Hilary*, it would likely have been the first time they heard a different regional accent or met someone from a different part of the country.

After tiring rail journeys, the arrival of CORB evacuees at provincial distribution centres became the next stage in the process of their placement. As the children arrived at the centres, responsibility for their care passed from the national to the provincial governments. Under the care of provincial authorities, the distribution centres were a temporary holding station for children until they were placed in private homes.¹⁰ It was from there that un-nominated children were matched with foster parents and nominated children were sent for onward travel. Once at the centre, the children would spend one or two weeks resting, becoming acquainted with their new surroundings, and regaining their land legs. Buildings that were easily accessible, with space to accommodate the children, were used as distribution centres. Hart House at the University of Toronto was utilised as Ontario's centre whilst other provinces used schools for the blind or "deaf and dumb".¹¹ Institutions that were already suited to accommodate children, such as the Maritime Home for Girls in Truro, Nova Scotia, were preferred.¹² As the children arrived in the summer months before school started for the new term, many spaces lay vacant. In Victoria, British Columbia, however, the Provincial Secretary wrote to Jopson that no such space could be found. Instead, the province had to rent a house for use as a clearing station, having to pay \$125 a month for eight months and incur costs to furnish it and

¹⁰ TNA, DO 131/44, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Children Evacuation to Canada Under CORB".

¹¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Catherine Read nee Mackinnon".

¹² LAC, RG76-I-A-1, Immigration Branch, "Vol 453".

install a fire escape.¹³ The facilitation and functioning of these centres came with many associated costs and required significant human resources. Children needed to be fed, cleaned, supervised, and also medically examined and assessed in order to find them foster homes.

For many evacuees, the arrival at the distribution centre came as a welcomed respite from a long train journey. On August 22, 1940 CORB evacuee Margaret Glenesk Beal wrote to her parents expressing her weariness: “Woke up fairly early this morning, and tried to kill time, only to be put back again earlier than ever, because of changing the time.” As a sign of the long voyage, a fourteen-year-old girl called Margaret recorded: “We expect to reach Winnipeg about 3 p.m. rather hope we stay there, because people say it is a nice place, and I am rather tired of travelling. It was very hot in the carriage, and we were bored stiff and couldn’t find much to do”. By this point, Margaret would have spent roughly sixty-six hours in a train and a total of nineteen days travelling. Boredom was replaced with the anxiety of being separated from her school friends Olga Burrows and Jeanne Gaunt from Scarborough, with whom she had shared the whole voyage. Olga joined Margaret in Winnipeg while Jeanne carried on to Vancouver. After waving goodbye to the children who were continuing on to Edmonton and Vancouver, Margaret and her group had their pictures taken and departed on buses for the distribution centre. Although unsure how long they would be there, Margaret noted that it afforded them much needed baths and time to sleep on solid ground.¹⁴

Apart from allowing the children to regain their land legs, their stay at the distribution centre had a very practical purpose. Although children were examined medically at the port of arrival, thorough examinations were conducted at the centres. Evacuees were again deloused and subjected to a tuberculosis test, vaccinations, and nose, throat, skin, and eye exams.¹⁵ The authority to vaccinate someone else’s child

¹³ LAC, RG76-I-A-1, Immigration Branch, “Vol 453”.

¹⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

¹⁵ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “CORB Children Evacuated to Canada”. Bilson notes that Canadian authorities worried greatly about tuberculosis as 27,000 people died from TB in 1940. Bilson, *The Guest Children*, 102.

however, was contentious as anti-vaccination groups in Britain pushed Canada to declare what their range of treatment would include.¹⁶ Vaccination was a discussion topic at the meeting of the National Advisory Committee for Children Overseas held of August 14 and 15, 1940. Dr. Davidson indicated that provincial authorities would administer vaccines for smallpox and diphtheria unless the child presented a certified letter indicating that the parent was a conscientious objector.¹⁷ Mary Hume's mother had never permitted her daughter to be vaccinated so that when she arrived at Hart House, Mary had to suffer through them all.¹⁸ It is important to note that these examinations were not to decide whether or not evacuees should be returned to Britain but rather to ensure that children were physically and mentally healthy before placement. Margaret Beal, in a letter to her parents, recorded in a letter to her parents being taken to the local children's hospital for her medical examination:

We took all our clothes off, except our 'bloomers', as the nurse called them, and put on little white coats. We were weighed and measured and then went in one by one to a doctor and a nurse. There were two or three couples doing us. I went into the doctor, who was very nice. They asked me all about everything and examined me and then said, "she seems to be disgustingly healthy. When he came to mental condition, he said, "What shall I put" and I said "Oh, weak", and he laughed and put "bright". There was nothing wrong with me. Most of the girls were inoculated for diphtheria, even those who had been done before, but I wasn't; but we were all done for T.B. In fact it was a very rigorous exam.¹⁹

This procedure also provided an opportunity to provide medical care to those found unwell. When W. Gordon Jones arrived with his group at the University of Toronto, it was discovered that a child on the ship had developed diphtheria. As a precaution, all the children were kept in quarantine in the university residences.²⁰ Also a part of that group, Grace Blackman was found to be a diphtheria carrier so she was placed in separate

¹⁶ For more on the history of anti-vaccination campaigning see Nadja Durbach, *Bodily Matters: the Anti-Vaccination Movement in England, 1853-1907* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹⁷ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "CORB Children Evacuated to Canada".

¹⁸ Mary Hume did not have a letter with her. Her mother had also prohibited her from ever swimming because she thought that public pools were dirty. Author's Evacuee Collection, "Mary Richardson".

¹⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Smolenski nee Beal".

²⁰ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "W. Gordon Jones".

quarantine. Consequently, Grace was separated from her brother Percy, which understandably caused both of them great upset. She would not see him again for fourteen weeks as he was sent to Timmins and she was sent to Riverdale Hospital in Toronto to remain in quarantine.²¹ To be separated once again after the long boat journey, just as they had arrived in the unfamiliar country, caused unavoidable strain on siblings.

Information collected from these medical examinations was added to each CORB child's provincial file and was used to help authorities place children in suitable foster homes. It can be seen from the unique records that have survived that Ernest Blois, Director of the Child Welfare Department of the Department of Public Health of Nova Scotia, was so efficient at compiling the case files that Jopson wrote to the Director General of CORB to recognise Blois for his "meticulous care" and record-keeping.²² In Nova Scotia at least, evacuees' individual case file also included a copy of their British medical inspection. Betty Parr's medical form from the Middlesbrough Education Committee showed that her mother had certified that "there is no insanity, feeble-mindedness or epilepsy in the child's family, and that the child has never suffered from fits of epilepsy". The doctor also rated the evacuees' nutrition (Betty scored a 'B'), height, weight, skin diseases, teeth, nose, throat, hearing, speech, vision, heart, lungs, circulation, nervous system, mental condition, cleanliness of head and body, and then stated if the child had any occurrences of enuresis, deformities, or disease or defects.²³ It is only through Nova Scotia records that we gain insight into the initial medical exam in Britain. In Betty's file, Blois also added a report from Betty's escort, Miss Gowans, who described Betty Parr (and her siblings, George and Doris) as coming "from a nice home. Extremely congenial; particularly good class of children. A little on the frail side owing

²¹ Grace claims that whilst at the hospital, her and other diphtheria patients were quarantined from everyone else except prisoners from a local jail. The prisoners apparently shoveled the snow and Grace and the other patients were permitted to speak to them. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Grace Wilson nee Blackman".

²² The record would include the Nova Scotian medical exam report, a list of every item they arrived in Canada with and eventually, information on their foster home. TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Canada, Reception, Nova Scotia".

²³ Ibid.

to the physique usually accompanying their particular coloring – red hair and fair complexion. Nothing unhealthy about these children”. Gowans’ experience was taken as expertise and her report would have been used as an evaluation of the children to help authorities find an appropriate foster family. Dr. Brison, the psychiatrist for the Department of Public Health of Nova Scotia, also examined evacuees. Dr. Brison recorded Betty Parr as having apparently normal health (except for a “large head”), and her personality as being cooperative for the test and seemingly well able to adjust herself to her new surroundings. Betty scored 107 on her I.Q. test and Dr. Brison concluded that she was of “high average intelligence” and could likely do “6 or 7th grade school work” as her test showed “very good reasoning ability” and mathematical ability.²⁴ Children were also subjected to informal interviews by Children’s Aid Society representatives and sometimes Red Cross workers so they could gain information from the children to be used to match them with a suitable home.²⁵ Reports from specialised individuals from Britain and Canada, judged to have expertise with regards to children, were collated as a form of transnational information-sharing. In Canada, files were kept at the provincial level but also forwarded to the national Immigration Branch so that each level of authority retained a record of each child. These files were used as a starting point in matching the children with appropriate foster homes.²⁶

While provincial childcare authorities and Children’s Aid Society representatives worked to allocate children to appropriate homes, the time spent in distribution centres provided evacuees with an introduction to Canadian life. The children themselves were left with time to acclimatize to their new surroundings and recuperate from the long journey. Margaret Beal wrote in her diary that they were able to walk around a park and the beautiful school grounds and a park and even went to a nearby zoo “with lions, bears, monkeys, wolves and other things”. She further noted “there is also an English garden.

²⁴ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Canada, Reception, Nova Scotia”.

²⁵ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Catherine Read nee Mackinnon”.

²⁶ Child Welfare records and Children’s Aid Society Records held at the Archives of Ontario for instance are restricted by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act that gives limited access to files under one hundred years old.

We saw a humming bird moth. Then we went to the pavilion, and bought fruit ices for a nickel. They were lovely.”²⁷ It was during such outings that the local community began to interact with evacuees. Not only was it “fun driving through the city and seeing all the shops” but as one group boarded a bus in Winnipeg they were all given new hankies and copies of newspapers with their photos. The new arrivals were certainly of interest to Winnipeggers. Margaret Beal and other CORB children in Winnipeg were given chocolate ice cream, watched films, and even had a big bonfire where they had their first taste of toasted marshmallows. In Truro, Nova Scotia, some elder children at the distribution centre (which had become known as the British Guest Children’s House) were asked to write letters to Mr. Jopson. On October 12, 1940 fifteen-year-old Sheila Lyttle from Chelmsford expressed her “gratefulness to the Canadian people for their kindness and friendliness towards us wherever we go”. She explained that as they travelled to Truro by bus they ran through a repertoire of songs, and upon arrival, their “spirits were soaring and [they] were all determined to have a good time!” She then made particular note of the quality and abundance of food which allowed them to eat “anything and everything [they] want[ed]”. The whole experience was evidently fruitful for Sheila as she noted that upon leaving England she weighed 8 st. 7 lbs. but already weighed 9 st. 6 lbs. Anne Sleight, aged eight from Middlesbrough, was also a fan of the food as she wrote “I am fond of apples and have about three a day”. Thirteen-year-old Geoffrey Shaw from Nottingham wrote to assure Jopson that their “impressions of Canada have been very favourable so far”.²⁸ For the children, the distribution centre was a space in which to settle down, receive some preferential treatment, and enjoy an abundance of food that was unavailable in Britain.

Simultaneously, provincial authorities and Children’s Aid Society workers had to find foster homes for evacuees. In the spirit of the Canadian promise to provide proper care for the children, the process by which foster homes were found for the children and how the children were matched with foster parents was closely monitored and organised.

²⁷ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolenski nee Beal”.

²⁸ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Canada, Reception, Nova Scotia”.

Just as CORB evacuees had been subjected to a selection process, so were potential Canadian foster parents. Both CORB and the Canadian authorities had agreed that children should be placed in private homes rather than institutions so that they could “enjoy a normal home life, receive individual attention, identify themselves far more easily with their surroundings and parents were reassured that they were being well looked after”.²⁹ Since the first meeting of the Canadian Conference in June, 1940 Canada’s mandate was that each Canadian province and agency would aim to provide a high standard of care for each and every British child. Charlotte Whitton even went as far as to suggest that the British children should receive a higher level of care “than that which prevailed for our own children within that area”.³⁰ In partnership, CORB and the Canadian authorities outlined positive qualities that foster-parents should have. Foster parents were not supposed to be too old (although no age limit was set), were supposed to have a good reputation, should have children of their own who were being well brought up, and should be in a suitable position to be able to feed, clothe, and care for the children without experiencing any hardship or lowered standard of living. Foster-parents’ homes had to be close to an accessible school in addition to being clean and big enough to accommodate an extra child or children without overcrowding. No child, it was decided, “should be expected to share a bed” and where possible, evacuees were to have a room to themselves. In choosing who could be a foster parent, preference was given to individuals with “ties to Great Britain”. Although undefined, the ties could have been personal, by lineage, or ethnic. CORB records show that in choosing foster homes, “meticulous care was taken to ensure that they were not going to be used for domestic or utilitarian purposes”.³¹ This was to ensure that evacuees were not taken into homes only to be used as free labour or where they would likely face abuse. Once a foster parent was selected, local childcare authorities, to ensure that children were not being placed in unfit homes, would conduct a rigorous home inspection.

²⁹ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

³⁰ MG20-E256, “Charlotte Whitton Fonds”

³¹ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “History of CORB”.

To be selected, a foster family not only had to be enthusiastic and have suitable accommodation but also needed to have a certain amount of wealth to take on the full responsibility of caring for the child. Except for medical treatment, the cost of feeding, clothing, and entertaining evacuees fell on the host parents. By implication, this meant that most foster families had to have at least a moderate level of income. Some evacuees were placed with working-class foster families if the home was deemed appropriate and the family could financially cope. Working-class families that were *nominated* to care for an evacuee would have been permitted to do so if the home fulfilled the same requirements.³² Being a pillar of the community, a doctor for example, and having a personal connection with those individuals at the distribution house making the placement decisions could also help Canadians to become foster parents. Placements were certainly made in this way despite Jopson advising Ernest Blois, the Director of Child Welfare in Halifax, to choose homes at random rather than particularly choosing homes from “the top drawer”.³³ Those making the placements, however, may have thought it wiser to place the children with a community member or someone they knew personally because those individuals would be conspicuous and presumably could be trusted to provide appropriate care for the children. Naturally, those making the placements would equally not wish to bear the consequences or any personal backlash of having chosen a foster family which then abused or maltreated an evacuee.

In Nova Scotia, Ernest Blois went as far as circulating an informational pamphlet entitled “Evacuated British Children” to those interested in fostering. The pamphlet reflects how Nova Scotia authorities perceived their responsibility for evacuees. It explained that all the children “must be provided with a good Canadian home where intelligent care will be given” and, in line with Canada’s mandate, reminded that “while preferences as to the sex and age of the child will be regarded in the distribution, those offering to provide homes should understand that it may not always be possible to assign to them exactly the type of child asked for”. Imploring people to come forward,

³² This ultimately depended upon local agencies so there may have been abnormalities.

³³ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Reception Arrangements”.

becoming a foster parent was even framed as a form of contribution to the war effort: “If you are in a position to do so, and if you wish to help effectively in winning the war, fill out an application”. Here, the pamphlet declared, was “a golden opportunity to help win the war”.³⁴ The pamphlet clearly worked as Nova Scotians wrote to Mr. Blois with enthusiastic letters of offers such as one from Mrs. Guy Carner, who wanted to help an evacuee because she had no children of her own.³⁵

Potential foster parents received an application package, also containing an information pamphlet, and a letter from Mr. Blois himself which explained that they had no sense of the numbers or demographics of the arriving children. To ensure potential foster parents were not put off, he explained that all of the children who had already arrived had been “attractive and intellectually bright, most of them considerably above par and all were in good health”. Although it would be impossible to guarantee a similar quality of additional children, Blois noted that “it is our understanding that no slum children or children known of bad habits or suffering from any contagious or infection diseases will be permitted to come”. The evacuee would not be an invalid or delinquent. Mr. Blois forcefully noted, however, that all this should not be the reason foster parents should take in an evacuees. Rather, according to Blois, foster parents needed to welcome evacuees because they were “children - British children whose parents are going through fearful ordeal at this time - and because their care and protection in this country is clearly and unmistakeably a distinct help on our part towards the winning of the war. By providing for those children we rendering a great help to the Mother Country”.³⁶ With that in mind, Nova Scotians were supposed to fill in an application form, always addressed to “Dear Friend”. One such application, completed by John A. Reagh from Middleton, Nova Scotia, illustrates the type of questions posed in order to place children within appropriate homes. Reagh stated that the household had a telephone, the nearest railway station was half a mile away in Middleton, a day school was a quarter-mile away,

³⁴ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Reception Arrangements”.

³⁵ Nova Scotia Archives (NSA), 2002-009, “Fred McKinnon Fonds”. Fred McKinnon was the Assistant Director of Child Welfare, Nova Scotia.

³⁶ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Canada, Reception, Nova Scotia”.

the family church was opposite their house, and the nearest medical doctor was only a quarter of a mile away. Reagh was a British subject (by birth), he was married, both he and his spouse were aged forty-two, he was a merchant (and supported the family through this income), and there were four occupants in the home, including his thirteen-year-old daughter. Other questions delved into the family's domestic space: the number of rooms in the house, whether the child could have their own room and bed, how many children they could take, and any gender and denomination preference (and if they would take siblings). Finally, applicants had to confirm that they understood that no board would be paid for the children and that care and maintenance would be purely voluntary. Applicants had to enclose three references to establish the character and reputation of the family. These questions not only helped weed out unsuitable homes and allowed suitable foster parents to be matched appropriately but also symbolised an unofficial contract to care for the children as their own.³⁷ Some Canadians were even so enthusiastic as to provide on their application additional details of cubic-space, washing facilities, and arrangements for play.³⁸ This was no frivolous placement of children in whichever homes would be available.

Once individuals had passed the application phase, potential foster parents were interviewed and their homes inspected by "visitors", by a representative of the childcare authorities, or a trusted community member, to establish suitability.³⁹ The London and Middlesex Branch of the Children's Aid Society recorded that 648 locals had submitted applications to take in evacuees and that "the necessity was seen of giving the British child guest applications the same attention as is given to all offers of homes for children. Special, though similar, application forms were used, references were secured, and visits made to the homes of the applicants".⁴⁰ The Nova Scotia Department of Public Health

³⁷ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Canada, Reception, Nova Scotia".

³⁸ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".

³⁹ This was a nation-wide practice but we do not know how closely it was followed. TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Reception Arrangements".

⁴⁰ UWO archive. Of the 648 applications, 312 were "reviewed carefully" and 281 "received approval". The 1940 report recorded that "many applications were received through the interest of the masonic lodges, rotary club, medical and professional associations, and some industrial organisations. Both city and county

even produced a guidebook with special instructions for these visitors for preparing reports on such applications. The guidebook outlined that visitors were to record the general attitude which the applicant and particularly the attitude which the husband and wife towards taking children and any disagreement between husband or wife or any objection within the household. The health of the family, nature and amount of income, neighbourhood, physical aspects of the home (lighting, heating, furnishings, and cleanliness), and the family's history (health, education, social and religious life) were also on trial. The temperament of potential foster mothers came under particular scrutiny. Visitors were supposed to judge whether the "the woman of the household [had] a harsh and forboding [sic] manner" and whether she was kindly disposed towards children". Authorities wanted to steer away from women who lacked suitable "mothering" instincts and qualities. The lack of any mention of the foster father suggests that the woman would be fully tasked with the childcare. The visitor's report for the Reagh household judged the family's character to be "very good in every way"; the family was reported to be "one of the very best in the Town" and Mrs. Reagh was the daughter of Dr. Sponagle, "a very outstanding physician in the district". The family was apparently "very intellectual and highly cultured, and their home is [was] one of refinement", the report recommending the home "without reservation". The visitor claimed that they were "certain that the child would be given every possible advantage, trained well, and treated as though one of the family" and additionally noted that "Mr. Reagh's brother lives next door and they would like to take two little boys". The two households would be suitable for placing three of the same family.⁴¹ Mr. John A. Reagh and his wife were approved as foster parents and welcomed thirteen-year-old George Parr into their home where he stayed for the duration of the war. The authorities also clearly took the visitor's other recommendation as Doris

homes were freely offered, and the applicants were found not only ready but anxious to share the security of their homes with the children whose safety is so sadly threatened in the British Isles".

⁴¹ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Canada, Reception, Nova Scotia".

(nine) and Betty Parr (eleven) were placed next door with Mr. and Mrs. Harold Borden-Reagh for the entire war.⁴²

Once a foster family was approved by authorities, every effort was made to match evacuees with homes where they could be happy and progress normally.⁴³ Authorities in Nova Scotia relied on the many forms in the children's case file to match evacuees with foster parents while other provinces had to cope with only a "case-history card" from CORB and any notes from escorts.⁴⁴ The welfare authorities, however, still had to match the children with homes as quickly as possible so the evacuees could return to a normal home life.⁴⁵ As re-emphasised in a report from the Co-ordinating Committee on the Reception and Care of British Children for Montreal, pairing and placing the children in homes was entirely at the discretion of the provincial welfare authorities. This prevented a "window shopping" selection process whereby approved foster-parents could arrive at a distribution centre to "pick out" a child.⁴⁶ This policy was firmly held in Nova Scotia as Mr. Sutherland, the Vice-President of Thompson & Sutherland Ltd from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, wrote to Mr. Blois to ask whether Mrs. Sutherland could go to Halifax to "make her own selection" of child. In reply, Blois reiterated the policy that individuals were not permitted to make selections but that authorities attempted to best meet foster parents' desires. Blois then sharply reminded Sutherland that "the ideal offer is one that will take any children sent to them and quite a number have made their offer on that basis".⁴⁷ Although the Sutherlands ultimately agreed to Blois' terms, Mr. Sutherland replied "I think your stand is ridiculous". This correspondence illustrates a fundamental difference between Canadian placements and those made for domestic evacuees. In Britain, children were billeted in the countryside and hosts were often able to come into a distribution

⁴² Author's Evacuee Database.

⁴³ TNA, DO 131/44, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Financial Aspects of Accommodation and Education".

⁴⁴ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB". If these files survived or were accessible then we would have even more valuable information about the children's backgrounds.

⁴⁵ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Reception Arrangements".

⁴⁶ TNA, DO 131/43, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "History of CORB".— this would lead to internal evac experience of being left till last

⁴⁷ NSA, 2002-009, "Fred McKinnon Fonds".

centre and choose which evacuees they wanted to take home. The cleanest, strongest, and often “prettiest” children would be selected first. Consequently many former domestic evacuees recall this process as a “cattle-market”, often remembering that they were chosen last.⁴⁸

CORB children whose parents had nominated a foster home for them were still monitored by authorities. Although Canadian authorities sought to adhere to evacuee parents’ wishes, they were also ultimately responsible for the evacuees’ well-being. Evidence suggests that some provincial authorities also thoroughly examined nominated foster families. On September 3, 1940 T. R. Blaine, Superintendent of the Edmonton Child Welfare office, wrote to Jopson to explain that some parents had nominated homes for their children that would not have been approved by the department. In one instance, Blaine refused to go ahead with the placement. Not only was the income barely sufficient to support the current family, but the evacuee was the daughter of a solicitor’s clerk (even though Blaine admitted to not knowing what that was), and from her appearance and attitude Blaine considered her to have been brought up in a good home. That the evacuee was Roman Catholic but the nominated family was Protestant, despite the British parents explaining that the matter of religion was agreed upon through personal correspondence, confirmed Blaine’s decision. Blaine explained the impact of his decision to Jopson, noting that his refusal had caused “quite a furor in the town where these people reside and where they are apparently well thought of”.⁴⁹ Although surely embarrassing for the nominated family, provincial authorities had the final say.

It is unclear from sources just how many nominated homes were ultimately deemed unsuitable. Although Blaine rejected a family on the grounds of income, this did not mean that all working-class homes were rejected. Un-nominated children may have been more likely to be taken in by middle-class families but evacuees could be placed in working-class homes so long as there was enough income to provide evacuees with necessities. Eva Stevenson, for instance, went to her uncle’s home in the working-class district of Hamilton, Ontario. Authorities also refused to place the children in nominated

⁴⁸ Parsons and Starns, “Against their Will”, 270.

⁴⁹ TNA, DO 131/45, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Reception Arrangements”.

homes because of apparent health issues of the host. Nine-year-old Laila June Nardell and her fifteen-year-old sister Daphne from Aldgate were supposed to stay with their aunt, uncle, and three cousins in Vancouver. With no explanation, at the distribution centre the girls had to await new homes because their family was apparently deemed unfit to look after them.⁵⁰ Daphne claims that later they were told that the “state of their health made it impossible for” them to take the girls. Their aunt apparently had depression whilst their uncle was still suffering from shell shock from the First World War.⁵¹ Mental health was not the only barrier to becoming a nominated foster parent as Douglas (nine) and Peter Wilde (seven) from Grantham were supposed to be sent to their Aunt Hilda. Upon arrival they were told that she could not look after them because she was quite elderly and had been ill.⁵² In both instances, case files show that they were subsequently placed in un-nominated homes. By nominating homes British parents had thought they were doing their best but such problems are symptomatic of the fact that British parents may never have met individuals whom they nominated, let alone visited their homes in Canada. Because evacuees’ case files do not record whether their nominated homes were found by authorities to be unsuitable upon arrival, such cases would be virtually undetectable without memoirs and oral interviews. The overall frequency of this occurrence cannot be estimated. However, that there is even limited evidence suggests that Canada authorities carefully scrutinised nominated homes as well as un-nominated homes. Despite parents’ wishes, the provincial authority took precedence over the individual family.

In at least one instance, a child had to be transferred to another province to be matched with his nominated home. Shifting children between provinces was supposed to be avoided. Upon arrival, thirteen-year-old Geoffrey Shaw was allocated to Nova Scotia because no official paperwork confirmed a nominated home. Once at the distribution centre, Shaw claimed that he was due to stay with his aunt in Galt, Ontario. Writing to Dr. Davidson at the Department of Immigration in Ottawa, Blois suggested that the boy would not protest if placed in a Nova Scotian home but that if his aunt’s was his “proper

⁵⁰ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Laila June Goodman nee Nardell”.

⁵¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Daphne Nardell”.

⁵² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Douglas Wilde”.

home” then he should be sent there. Blois added that the boy was capable of traveling alone and would not need any accompaniment on the journey.⁵³ Shaw left the provincial distribution centre in Truro, N.S. on October 13, 1940 and travelled to Galt, Ontario. By that time, Blois had already forwarded to his family a photograph taken of Geoffrey. His mother replied to Blois thanking him for his kindness towards Geoffrey and to pass on Geoffrey’s comment that he had been very happy in Nova Scotia.⁵⁴ Although this transfer does not alter provincial distribution statistics, it illustrates the time, effort and co-operation Canadian authorities exerted.

Although literature on CORB has always recognised that British parents could nominate a home for their child in Canada, the number of children who went to nominated versus un-nominated homes has never been quantified. As evacuee case files from CORB show whether the child originally went to a nominated or an un-nominated home, the database demonstrates for the first time this proportional distribution of children. By nominating the home of a relative, friend, or acquaintance, British parents clearly thought that it would be best for their children to be cared for by someone with whom they had a personal connection. Of all the CORB evacuees who arrived in Canada, 41.4 percent were originally placed in nominated homes. As a national trend, 30 percent of nominated children went to live with their aunt and 11 percent went to live with an uncle. 37 percent went to live in nominated homes where the relation to the evacuee parents was not recorded. Children also went to live with their grandparents (twenty-five cases), “relatives” (thirty-five cases), cousins (fifteen cases), and siblings (four cases). Three children went to live with either their mother or father who was living in Canada. One child’s parents sent them to a nominated home in Nova Scotia with a connection through the Masonic Lodge.⁵⁵

⁵³ NSA, 2002-009, “Fred McKinnon Fonds”.

⁵⁴ Author’s Evacuee Database. Geoffrey’s case file curiously lists his first foster home as with Mrs. C.P. Philip who was unnominated. It is curious as to why he did not go to his aunt. After roughly a year, Geoffrey’s host became ill. He then moved to another family who had a family bereavement within the same month of Geoffrey’s arrival so he was moved for a third time and stayed in Kitchener for the remainder of the war.

⁵⁵ Author’s Evacuee Database.

The provincial distribution of nominated children can also be estimated. (Figure 11) In Ontario 52 percent and in Alberta 51 percent of CORB evacuees went to nominated homes. This number was only surpassed by British Columbia as 53.3 percent of its evacuees were nominated. Saskatchewan (46.1 percent) and Quebec (42.6 percent) were of similarly equal distributions. Only 24.5 percent of CORB evacuees went to nominated homes in Manitoba yet this number was even lower in Nova Scotia (0.08 percent) and New Brunswick (0.09 percent). None of the twenty-five evacuees in Prince Edward Island went to nominated homes. (Figure 12) That in Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta approximately half of the evacuees were placed in nominated homes means that evacuee parents drew on the most connections to individuals in these provinces. (Figure 13) This is unsurprising as prewar immigration statistics reveal Ontario and British Columbia as the top choices for British emigrants.⁵⁶ Although Ontario received the largest number of unnominated evacuees in absolute terms, proportionally Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and PEI received the most un-nominated children. This indicates that these provinces, three being Maritime Provinces, were called upon less by British parents to take evacuees through personal connections. (Figure 14) For Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, this may be attributed to the provinces' much earlier settlement, meaning personal and familial connections to Britain could have faded. That individuals in these provinces offered to take unnominated evacuees illustrates that helping Britain's children was still perceived as a worthwhile cause.

Another significant aspect of the placement of evacuees, both nominated and unnominated, was finding homes for siblings. Both CORB and Canadian authorities aimed wherever possible to place children from one family in the same foster home. Of the 1,532 CORB evacuees, 932 children came with siblings.⁵⁷ Some children came with siblings in groups of three, four, or even five. As some families sent all their children, evacuation can also be seen as a scheme that impacted whole families with some parents,

⁵⁶ Barber, Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 13. According to the 1940 edition of the *Canadian Year Book*, by 1931, there were over one million British-born individuals living in Canada. In 1939, 16,994 immigrants arrived in Canada (not only British). Of those, 2,190 went to British Columbia, 3,433 to Quebec, and 5,957 to Ontario. *Canada Year Book*, 1940, 155.

⁵⁷ Author's Evacuee Database.

in effect, becoming temporarily childless. Canadian authorities attempted to keep siblings together although this was not always possible. In some cases, like that of the Parry family from Bristol, it was too difficult to find one single home that would take four children. Ann (fourteen), Martin (twelve), Edna (eight), and John (four) were all sent to Toronto but were placed in different homes. The Jarvis family, consisting of William (eight), Brenda (six), Sara (thirteen), and Denis (ten), were all sent to McGarrie, Ontario, yet only William and Denis were accepted into the same home. Brenda and Sara were placed in two different foster homes.⁵⁸ Mr. and Mrs. Muttart in Edmonton, Alberta, originally thought nothing of taking in all four of the Oldham children that included three girls (Ada, fourteen, Margaret, nine, Violet, eight) and one boy (Horace, eleven). After only eight months however, Mrs. Muttart was listed as ill and the four children were moved. Ada and Margaret were subsequently placed with a Mrs. Forbes whilst Violet and Horace were sent to separate homes. In instances where Canadian authorities were unable to place siblings together, some children were distressed as their mothers had strictly told them to not allow anyone to separate them from their siblings.

Canadian authorities attempted to place unappointed children with foster parents according to their preferences for the evacuees' gender and age. (Figure 15) Although it is impossible to estimate how many foster parents received their preference, the database reveals that there were 783 male and 748 female CORB evacuees in Canada. This almost even divide meant that CORB did an adequate job of selecting an equal number of boys and girls. It is additionally impressive that CORB was able to achieve such equality with its complicated selection process and unreliable shipping. The database also reveals the ages of CORB evacuees. At the time of departure, children had to be between the ages of five and fifteen. Yet the majority of evacuees were actually between the ages of eight and thirteen. This suggests that parents were less willing to send their young children to Canada. There were only fifty five-year-olds sent to Canada. Of those fifty children, thirty (or 60 percent) were sent with siblings.⁵⁹ This suggests that parents were more willing to send their younger children if they were traveling with an older sibling.

⁵⁸ Author's Evacuee Database.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Another explanation is that CORB officials may have been cautious of accepting a large number of applications from fourteen- or fifteen-year-olds who would soon be old enough to start contributing to the war effort either through enlistment or on the home front at factories. This age range enabled some foster parents to request children who were young, sometimes to act as companions for their own children, while others preferred older children who might not be such a handful.

Canadian authorities had to match un-nominated evacuees with foster homes of a similar religious denomination. (Figure 16) The overwhelming majority of CORB evacuees were listed on their CORB applications as Protestant or identified as the belonging to the Church of England. The next largest group was Roman Catholic. In descending order, smaller groups were categorised as Methodist Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Non-Conformist, Baptist, Congregationalist, Jewish, and Episcopalian. Out of all un-nominated children, less than five each were Church of Scotland, Christian Scientist, Salvation Army, and Non-denominational. The religion of only two children was listed as “not applicable”. Ontario and Nova Scotia received the most (forty-two of sixty-nine) Roman Catholic children for distribution into foster homes.⁶⁰ These figures illustrate that all provinces received the proportion of children of specified religious denominations that was originally requested during the planning of evacuation (chapter one). British Columbia had requested that of the children placed in the province, 88 percent of children would be Protestant, 10 percent Catholic and 2 percent Jewish. In reality, British Columbia received 75 percent Protestant un-nominated children, 6 percent Catholic and 2 percent Jewish.⁶¹ Un-nominated children were allocated across provinces by their religious denomination and complied with provinces’ desires. Nova Scotia requested a 60/40 percent split between Protestant and Roman Catholic and received 85 percent Protestant and 12 percent Roman Catholic evacuees. Alberta had been subtly resistant to

⁶⁰ Author’s Evacuee Database.

⁶¹ Of the 110 nominated children in British Columbia, 89 were protestant (81 percent), six were Roman Catholic (5 percent), six Methodist (5 percent), five Presbyterian (four percent), two Congregationalists (1 percent), and one Agnostic (0.9 percent) and one belonging to the Church of Scotland (0.9 percent). This meant that overall, British Columbia received 77 percent Protestant, 5 percent Roman Catholic, and 0.9 percent Jewish children. Author’s Evacuee Database.

accepting children other than those from Protestant homes (and reluctantly would accept Catholic children). That Alberta received 85 percent (forty-four of fifty-two) Protestant children and only 5.7 percent Catholic (three of fifty-two) illustrates that Canadian authorities respected the province's wishes. Provinces in fact tended to receive a higher proportion of Protestant children than requested.

By the end of the September 1940, all CORB evacuees had been placed in foster homes and hundreds of Canadians gained the unique role of foster parents to British evacuee children. A small sample of placements illustrates some of the factors that motivated foster parents. In Verdun, Quebec, evacuees Peter and Joan Warren went to live with the Falkners.⁶² As Edward Falkner was himself adopted, the Falkners felt a sense of duty to offer homes to British children. In Montreal, the Hills took in Marjorie May Everard who was fourteen just like their daughter Peggy.⁶³ The Hills opened their home not only to give their daughter a companion but also because of the legacy of Mr. Hill being wounded at Vimy Ridge in the Great War. Five-year-old John Macnab from Glasgow was taken in by the Powles in Winnipeg who heard about CORB through their church. Additionally, Mrs. Powles had been born in Liverpool, coming to Canada as a teenager, and still felt ties to Britain.⁶⁴ Her husband had fought in the Great War and similarly felt a connection with Britain. That the Powles also had a nine-year-old son who could benefit from a "little brother" was an added bonus. Often, foster parents were known members of the community. Phyllis and Brian Proctor from York went to live in Barrie with the Simmons family who owned Simmons and Co., a shop that sold woman's coats.⁶⁵ Frederick and James Kearney from Glasgow were taken in by the family of F. Rush who was the local railway station agent in Holland, Manitoba while James Bain went to live with R. B. Dobson, who was the Principal of the Prince of Wales Public School in Windsor, Ontario.⁶⁶

⁶² Author's Evacuee Database. Also had a brother Clifford who went to live with another family.

⁶³ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Peggy Mackey nee Hill". Marjorie was from Grimsby.

⁶⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Kathleen Kristjansson". John Macnab came with his sister Emily but they were eventually placed in different foster homes.

⁶⁵ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Robert Halfyard".

⁶⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "June Hickman", Author's Evacuee Database.

Once evacuees were placed in a foster home, Canadian authorities sent a letter to their biological parents notifying them of their children's whereabouts. The mother of Alan Maynard, for instance, was sent a letter on September 12, 1940 explaining that her son had been placed with Mr. and Mrs. Edward Green in Montreal. The letter reported that the Green's had a 15 year-old-son who was glad to have Alan as a companion. The letter closed with a reminder that because Alan came through CORB, he would be visited periodically to check his progress.⁶⁷ Others, like Blois in Nova Scotia, took it upon themselves to write letters to both new foster parents and biological parents. On August 16, 1940 Blois notified Mr. and Mrs. Parr of George, Doris, and Betty's placement and even went one step further to include a snapshot photograph of each of the children. For many British parents, this was the first proper news they had received about their children who were by then thousands of miles away. Some parents replied to Blois thanking him for his update but also for the much appreciated photographs. Mrs. Stephenson, the mother of eight-year-old Gerald who went to an un-nominated home in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, wrote to Blois "Everyone who has in any way catered for our children have been most extremely kind and it is with deep gratitude I accept the snap you sent me of my son." She expressed the power of such photos by explaining that "it seemed the answer to my unuttered longing 'just for a glimpse of him', and for this I thank you". Mr. Seale, a father of four evacuees, also thanked Blois. As an expression of his appreciation, Mr. Seale wrote: "Do you know of any Canadian Troops who may be about these parts that we might get in touch with, we could probably give them a little home comfort should they get weekend leaves, we should be only too pleased to do so".⁶⁸ Showing hospitality towards Canada's soldiers could begin to repay the favour of Canadians caring for their children.

Whereas the placement of CORB evacuees was highly regulated by both CORB and Canadian authorities, children who arrived in Canada as private evacuees were not subjected to the same placement regulations. That is not to say, however, that private

⁶⁷ IWM Documents, 9928, "Canadian Evacuee's Instructions, 1940".

⁶⁸ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Canada, Reception, Nova Scotia".

evacuees were not carefully placed or closely monitored. Private evacuees who were travelling alone would find their way to their pre-arranged host. For instance, in Dixie, Ontario, Thomas L. Kennedy (a Major in the First World War who became Premier in 1948) and his wife Minnie took in John (thirteen) and Mary Sibun (ten) as a sign of their contribution to the war effort.⁶⁹ Fabian Pease and his sister Dora went to live in Chester, Nova Scotia, with Dr. and Mrs. Woodroffe, a man with whom their father had been interned near Berlin in the First World War.⁷⁰ Private children travelling in groups often still faced a process of placement. In some instances, groups of private evacuees arrived at a distribution centre or a similarly organised communal space. Upon arrival in Toronto, the group from the Sherborne School for Girls stopped at the University of Toronto's Hart House for dinner and then spent their first night at Hutton House. They, too, had an additional medical examination and vaccinations. From there, homes were found for the girls through local connections, particularly with Branksome Hall, a girl's private school in the city. Sherborne girl Jean Ingham wrote to her parents on August 9, 1940 recording that she and another girl had been "billeted" where they had "a bedroom each and a bathroom just for [their] use". Jean explained that she would attend the girl's school nearby (Branksome Hall) where the "uniform is a pleated plaid skirt and a blouse and a tartan tie". The school evidently met Jean's standards as she noted "I think they have lessons on the bagpipes too so it should be ok".⁷¹ Other Canadian private schools offered spaces in their boarding schools or offered billets with their pupils' families. Through arrangements made by Major Ney, Abinger Hill, a preparatory school in Surrey, sent fifty-five boys directly to Ashbury College.⁷² The school, like Havergal College in Toronto and Trafalgar School for Girls in Montreal, provided a reduced fee for evacuees. Schools across Canada such as Ovenden School for Girls in Barrie, Ontario Ladies College in Whitby, St. George's School in Vancouver, Upper Canada College in Toronto,

⁶⁹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Hugh".

⁷⁰ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Fabian Pease".

⁷¹ IWM Documents, 15368, "Private Papers of Miss J Ingham".

⁷² Twenty sisters and cousins of the boys were added to the group. Major Ney's son was an Abinger old boys so Ney approached the school to tell them that Ashbury would welcome them and suggested that parents notify Abinger if they wanted to send their children. Tony German, *A Character of Its Own: Ashbury College, 1891-1991* (Toronto: Creative Bound, 1991).

and Queen Margaret's School in Duncan, British Columbia, also welcomed evacuees into their school.⁷³ Lenora Williams escorted twenty-eight children, the youngest just three-years-old, from Byron House. Upon arrival in Ottawa, William had no secure accommodation for the group until Elmwood (a girls' boarding school, closed for the summer) heard of their plight and hosted the group for six weeks.

Finding foster homes for private evacuees was the responsibility of Canadian groups that had offered their support. Children from the Ford Motor Company arrived in Walkerville, Ontario and were taken to Wallace Campbell's house; he had converted the whole top floor to temporarily accommodate the evacuees. Peter Horlock, along with eleven other boys, was taken instead to the home of Mr. and Mrs. L.C. Angstrom in Amherstburg. The family cared for the children until the foster parents "assigned" to the children came to collect them. Peter Horlock was selected to remain with the Angstrom family, making him feel incredibly fortunate to stay on such a beautiful farm.⁷⁴ Back at the Campbells, foster parents visited the children and matches were made. The Campbells themselves kept twenty-three evacuees for the course of the war.⁷⁵ Evacuees were often placed with Ford employees. Dennis Drew and his sister were placed with the Battersbys as Mr. Dorest Battersby held a senior office position at Ford in Windsor.⁷⁶ From the Campbells, Catherine Anderson was placed with a family, coincidentally with her same last name.⁷⁷

The University of Toronto's committee was similarly tasked with finding homes for the children to which it had extended offers. Surprise news of the arrival of the first party of children of Oxford University professors reached the Toronto office on June 29, 1940. Although plans for accommodation had been discussed at length, no

⁷³ LAC, RG76-I-A-1, Immigration Branch, "Vol: 452". Some children were sent directly by their parents to the schools

⁷⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Peter Horlock".

⁷⁵ "We Remember: Safe Haven", Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 20, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/39/safe-haven.html>.

⁷⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Dennis Drew".

⁷⁷ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson". It is much harder to uncover how such private placements were made but there is a chance that in some circumstances, foster parents played more of a role in "selecting" their evacuee compared to CORB foster parents.

accommodation had been definitely arranged. Dr. Forward from the committee rushed to Montreal to meet the children and by the time they arrived in Toronto on July 3, 1940, everything had been prepared with great efforts. Just like foster parents wishing to take in CORB evacuees, potential university foster parents to these children were interviewed. A committee report for 1941 recounted that “every care [was] taken to fit the right children into the homes offered by the committee”. Of the 104 evacuees that arrived, seventy-eight were placed into homes with foster parents. Forty-one children were assigned to live in the homes of twenty-nine members of University staff whilst thirty-seven children lived in the homes of University graduates. Only twenty-one children were placed in the homes of others (but those foster parents likely were still well connected to the University in some way). Three children were placed in Broxtowe House in Oakville and just two children were placed in homes by the Children’s Aid Society. Included in the above numbers were six children who were placed in four homes of the ten committee members. This method of placement therefore meant that the children could be monitored during their stay in Canada. In addition, the university was able to draw on the expertise at the Institute of Child Study, particularly of child psychologist Dr. Karl Bernhardt who acted in an advisory role and was apparently “on hand” all summer (1940). Index cards for each child were created and between July 8 and August 31, 1940 voluntary workers gave 1,355 hours to clerical assistance.⁷⁸ Although not required, the university committee kept in regular contact with CORB even though its evacuees were private.

Like CORB evacuees, the majority of the 1,855 private evacuees traveled to Canada with siblings. Also like CORB children, the database reveals those who traveled with siblings and their provincial distribution. (Figure 17) A staggering 64 percent of private evacuees went to homes in Ontario. Unlike with CORB evacuees, the province that took the next largest number of private evacuees was Quebec (324). (Figure 18) Unsurprisingly, British Columbia also took a large number of private evacuees. Combining the distribution of both groups of evacuees (private and CORB) shows that overall, Ontario provided homes to the largest number of evacuees. (Figure 19) Exactly

⁷⁸ TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Offer from University of Toronto”.

50 percent (1593 of 3186) of all evacuees in Canada went to Ontario. Quebec received 14 percent, British Columbia fostered 12 percent, and Nova Scotia, nearly 7 percent. The placement of both CORB and private evacuees was often a complex process that required a great deal of matchmaking. Yet all involved in the process were desirous of finding suitable homes for the children where they would be well cared for, nourished, and flourish. The time and effort put into placing children in foster homes illustrates that Canadians recognised that their placements would shape their experience in Canada, and even their later lives. The children's placements would be the basis for their life in Canada and all other experiences stemmed from, or at least were related to, their new "family life". Once placed, the children had to begin to navigate this new domestic sphere. After almost a month of traveling, their placement was the first chance they had to settle down in Canada and attempt to regain some much needed stability of family life.

Evacuees' experiences in their Canadian foster homes were also shaped by the extent to which they were able to maintain contact with their family in Britain. Between 1944 and 1945 alone, 374 million letters were posted overseas from Britain.⁷⁹ Just as it was important for foster parents and biological parents to maintain a connection throughout the war, it was very important that the evacuees themselves were able to preserve meaningful connections with family in Britain. In 1940, child-psychologist Donald Winnicott in "Children and their Mothers" argued that "the younger the child, the less his ability to keep the idea of a person alive in himself; that is to say, unless he sees that person or has tangible evidence of her existence within minutes, hours, or days, that person is for him dead".⁸⁰ Letters would help evacuees maintain an image of their families, and home. CORB, Canadian provincial authorities, and individual foster families were cognisant of the importance of letter writing. Although the war was 'the

⁷⁹ Jenny Hartley, "'Letters are Everything These Days': Mothers and Letters in the Second World War", in Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600–1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 183. Lee Cooper, "From 'Love Letters' to 'Miss You'", *Journal of American Culture*, vol. 19, no. 4 (1996), 17.

⁸⁰ "Children and their Mothers" (Written for *The New Era in Home and School*, 1940) in Donald Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 13.

last golden age of letter writing', historians of childhood have not yet taken advantage of evacuees' letters.⁸¹ Letter writing in many foster families became a weekly routine.⁸² Margaret Burt Hamilton continued a tradition from her own family and wrote letters every Sunday afternoon.⁸³ In return, the receipt of letters from their parents was often met with excitement. Foster parents who understood the importance of ensuring that the children keep their families in their thoughts goaded others. Joan Ambridge's aunt made her write a letter home each week, as did Peter Horlock's Aunt Hazel.⁸⁴ Because of this goading, many evacuees wrote their letters under gaze of their foster parents. Even more extreme were the foster parents who read all of the evacuees' letters. Mary Hume had to write to her parents every Saturday morning after which her aunt would demand to read each one.⁸⁵ Not only an invasion of privacy, this meant that Mary could not express any concerns to her parents. This surveillance limited the child's ability to use their letters as a private space for communicating their thoughts.

In other instances, over-anxious foster parents used this as a way to find out what the evacuees thought of them and to ensure that the children would not "misrepresenting" anything. Sometimes foster parents or caregivers would add annotations for clarification at the end of letters. For example, Anthony Paish was staying with the Calders temporarily in September 1940 when he reported to his parents that "I have had two more hurts of different kinds, one a burn which I had when popping pop corn... and a sort of cut I got when I was falling off a rock". Clearly anxious to assure Anthony's parents that he was being kept safe, Eva Calder wrote on the bottom of the letter with apparent haste, "The children are well...Anthony is fatter and has grown a lot... do not worry about the children, we love them and will take great care of them. Anthony's brushes and bruises do not [amount] to any thing – what all boys get".⁸⁶ Yet it was not only the children's

⁸¹ Hartley, "Letters are Everything These Days", 183. Cooper, "From 'Love Letters' to 'Miss You'", 193.

⁸² Although this became a chore for some evacuees, Winnicott commended foster parents for "intuitively recognis[ing] the importance" of ensuring children wrote letters home. Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 13.

⁸³ Margaret Burt Hamilton, pier 21 p29

⁸⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Joan Ambridge", Author's Evacuee Collection, "Peter Horlock".

⁸⁵ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Mary Richardson nee Hume".

⁸⁶ IWM Documents, 3283, "Private Papers of Miss E M Paish".

letters which would be read over by a critical (spy) eye. Corrected or scratched out dates and spelling corrections are other tell-tale signs of this supervision. Censors also read the letters that passed between evacuees and their families. On August 17, 1940, Elizabeth Paish explained to her parents that “all the letters that have come latterly have been censored”. Not only was Elizabeth aware of the effect the war took on the family’s letter writing but she even recorded that “examiner 7 thousand and something” was usually the culprit.⁸⁷ The letters that Peter Horlock received from his mother often looked like “paper cut outs” from the censor’s scissors.⁸⁸

Some children like Colin Cave were so young upon arrival that they were unable to compose a letter beyond simple sentences. As a way to communicate, many young evacuees used drawings in their letters to their parents. Colin Cave closed one letter from 1941 about playing in the snow with a picture of him playing with a snowball. Even Patricia Cave’s addition of smiley faces and even a sad face drawn into the letter “O” in a letter in February, 1941 was her method of communicating her feelings.⁸⁹ Anthony Paish included a drawing of the beach and waterfront of McGreggor Lake during his visit with friends of his host, subsequently including a map of McGreggor Lake in another letter.⁹⁰ Such drawings helped the evacuees communicate their new experiences in Canada. At times, these drawings seem to be infused with a deeper symbolism. On July 20, 1941 Anthony wrote “I hope the war will be over soon” and included a drawing of Ottawa with a church and tower. The tower’s clock struck 8 pm and Anthony wrote in “dong, dong, dong”.⁹¹ Although the war’s end would come four years later, Anthony’s clock reflected his desire for the clock to ring out for the war’s end. Some children were so young that drawings or even, at times, postcards with signatures or drawings on the back were their only mode of correspondence. In 1941, Julie Kemp sent a postcard of the area she lived in; using the picture, she simply wrote “we swim here”.⁹² When evacuees did write

⁸⁷ IWM, Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

⁸⁸ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Peter Horlock”.

⁸⁹ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

⁹⁰ IWM, Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

⁹¹ IWM, Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

⁹² IWM, Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

letters, they were not always guaranteed to arrive. Ships carrying mail would often be sunk and letters would be lost. This sometimes created broken narratives in correspondences and families, more usually foster parents and parents, would number their letters to ensure that the other party would know if a letter was lost. The situation was ripe for misunderstandings. Similarly, delays often meant that there would be long spans without letters or that several letters would all arrive at once. Sometimes the opposite happened as by 1944, however, Elizabeth Paish noted that her parents' letter "only took 19 days to get here".⁹³

Evacuees used letters to maintain contact with their families in Britain and as a vehicle to relate their new experiences in their foster homes. These letters provide a unique window into how evacuees, as children rather than as adults remembering their experiences, reflected on and comprehended their new lives in Canada.⁹⁴ While evacuees shared their experiences with their parents, Canadian foster parents also wrote to evacuees' parents. This correspondence often came to shape evacuees' experiences as foster parents sought to consult parents on their children's progress.⁹⁵ A thematic approach best reveals evacuees' experiences within their private foster homes over the course of the war. Each evacuee's experience was unique yet there were shared experiences that evacuees had to navigate. The experiences that evacuees had within their foster homes were critical to their happiness and their ability to "settle down". Their experiences in their new home life were largely dependent upon those within the house. Some children, like Elizabeth Paish, in writing to their parents not long after their placements, used descriptions of their new surroundings to express their feelings about their foster homes. Elizabeth wrote on September 22, 1940 that "We have a small wood

⁹³ IWM, Documents, 3283, "Private Papers of Miss E M Paish".

⁹⁴ See Halstead, "Dear Mummy and Daddy: Reading Wartime Letters from British Children Evacuated to Canada During the Second World War", 2015 and James Greenhalgh, "'Till We Hear the Last All Clear': Gender and the Presentation of Self in Young Girls' Writing about the Bombing of Hull during the Second World War", *Gender & History* 26 no 1. (2014): 167-183.

⁹⁵ For more on women who have cared for children who are not their own such as wet nurses, step-mothers, and foster mothers, see: Kristin Celello, *Making Marriage Work* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), Jodi Vanderberg-Daves, *Modern Motherhood* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2014).

at the bottom of the garden and there is a good tree for climbing there, I also climb telegraph pole. There are grapes growing in the garden and Lizzy eats a lot. Elizabeth and Joanna Rowbatt came to tea yesterday and they climbed the trees too".⁹⁶ The day after Patricia Cave arrived at her foster parents' she wrote to her parents "as it is the morning of my first day I cannot tell you much. I am having '10' cents of pocket money".⁹⁷ Although Patricia was already thinking in terms of Canadian currency, she still thought of home as she asked her parents to water the ferns she had given them as a present and send her "snowwhite frock, bridesmaids [sic] frock, and shoes gold or silver". Patricia's brother was so young that he only wrote "I am having a nice time tttttttt colin oooooo". That he mistakenly wrote 't' instead of an 'x' reflects just how young Colin was. For Les Oliver, who came from Coulsdon near London, the change was stark. Going to live with his uncle in rural British Columbia was, for Les, like "stepping back in time" as he felt he was "in the wild west".⁹⁸ Other evacuees felt bewildered as their foster families had maids. Unlike her own, Catherine Anderson's foster family had a car; her only journey in a car previously had been to her uncle's cottage.⁹⁹ Les Oliver similarly found "going for a drive" was a novelty as "very few working class people in England had a car".¹⁰⁰

Evacuees' experience within the private space were shaped by their acclimatisation to their new homes. Canadian homes contrasted greatly with evacuees' homes in Britain. Peter Horlock found his foster home to be big, beautiful, and overlooking the Detroit River; the house and its barns and sheds made the house resemble a park-like setting.¹⁰¹ For evacuees like Les Oliver, the adjustment to a Canadian home was less impressive. In comparison with his life in Britain, electricity was uncommon in rural areas in Canada so at Les's school the electricity only came on at dusk and "outhouses" were a common sight. Yet Canadian homes had benefits as Les appreciated the warmth of Canadian houses with potbellied stoves, which were incomparable to small

⁹⁶ IWM, Documents, 3283, "Private Papers of Miss E M Paish".

⁹⁷ IWM Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

⁹⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Les Oliver".

⁹⁹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson".

¹⁰⁰ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Les Oliver".

¹⁰¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Peter Horlock".

English fireplaces that did not emit much heat. The party line telephone was also a novelty as few people had one where Les lived. Similarly, John Macnab fell in love with his foster family's home. In his home in Glasgow, there were four adults and two children living in a flat with two rooms and kitchen.¹⁰² John's Canadian house had a real bathroom, not just a lavatory; it had a big basement with a furnace that would heat the whole house; it had a front and a back garden and, as a novelty for John, the house stood alone, unattached unlike his tenement house. According to John, the best qualities of the house lay in the fact that he had a "proper bedroom" with a bunk bed and that he was "allowed to go anywhere in the house". As CORB had stipulated that it was best for evacuees to have their own rooms, Canadian houses offered evacuees a space of their own, something that would have been a new experience for many. Evacuees who had gone into boarding schools in Canada would not have had such a family experience but would have had a boarding school experience in which friendships and special relationships were formed in substitution. To make sense of their new space and their place within it, evacuees employed comparisons to Britain.

All evacuees had to become accustomed to their foster parents; their decision on how to refer to them suggests the level of comfort that existed between evacuees and their foster parents. With some sort of family or personal tie, nominated evacuees would not have entered into a totally unfamiliar family. If joining their aunt or uncle, which the majority of nominated children did, then there would be a clear family connection. Even if the child had never met their Canadian relation, the foster mother/father would have at least been able to speak about the evacuee's family within a shared family history. In the long run, this could have been beneficial in helping the children keep a link to home. In un-nominated homes, the relationship between evacuee and foster parent had to be negotiated, particularly in terms of what the evacuee would call their foster parent. It was obvious that evacuees should be called by their first names, not least because this was normal practice but also because their status as evacuees was conspicuous. Outsiders would have known who they were. Yet foster parents had to find an appropriate label for their temporary parenting status. In some instances, foster parents suggested that

¹⁰² Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Macnab".

evacuees refer to them as “Auntie” and “Uncle”. Over time, other evacuees would apply the term themselves. For Peter Horlock, his foster parents changed from Mr. and Mrs. Angstrom to “Aunt Hazel” and “Uncle Carlton”.¹⁰³ Marjorie Everard called her foster parents “Auntie Annie” and “Uncle Jack”.¹⁰⁴ Although there was often no familial relationship between foster parents and the evacuees, “Auntie” was an appropriate term. It did not attempt to replace or infringe upon the children’s biological parents’ status but still carried a familial and comfortable connotation. “Aunties” and “Uncles” after all could be cast as appropriate and temporary caregivers that still maintained some adult authority over the children. Moreover, the term also reflected the way that evacuation was shaped simply as children being temporarily sent to the Imperial family for a stay with distant relations. That these were not relations by blood was of reduced significance.

The names evacuees used to refer to their foster parents came to symbolise the developing relationship between them. It is less likely that foster parents would have suggested the maternal and paternal extremes as appropriate names; the children themselves would have applied such terms. This is particularly the case with six-year-old Julia Kemp. Privately evacuated, Julia had originally been sent to stay with distant friends of her parents yet in 1941 Julia was moved on to live with Alice Harper and her husband. It was with the Harpers that Julia became evidently quite comfortable as the couple’s only child. Alice and Julia’s mother Lucy began a lengthy correspondence. On August 9, 1941 Lucy wrote to Alice to elaborate as to why they wished for Julie to be moved. Julia’s then foster mother Mrs. Maston had written to Lucy to remark that “Julie is well...although never became one of the family, always something of a lone wolf”. To this Lucy became frightfully depressed and became worried that her young, usually joyful daughter was not acclimatising well. On August 24, 1941, Lucy wrote to Alice Harper to explain that she would “infinitely prefer you to take our place in Julie’s affections than have her feel lonely”.¹⁰⁵ Julia evidently found much more happiness with the Harpers as Lucy wrote to Alice on November 17, 1941, “I am so delighted to know

¹⁰³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Peter Horlock”.

¹⁰⁴ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Peggy Mackey nee Hill”.

¹⁰⁵ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

that you are a ‘mummy’, it is quite perfect to know and from Julie herself. I am more than content”. This refers to the fact that Julia had begun to call Alice “Mummy” or as Julia spelled it “Mummie”. This led to some interesting letters as Julia wrote letters to Mummie but whilst also writing about Alice as “Mummie”. In January, 1945, Julia wrote “Dear Mummie, Mummie was sick in hospital for Christmas”.¹⁰⁶ Having her daughter call another woman “Mummie” would likely not have been the easiest thing for Lucy to endure but it was clear that she would do whatever was needed to ensure her daughter felt loved.¹⁰⁷ Other children such as Minnie Roberts were also able to find a space within the dynamic of their new foster families. Minnie, six when she arrived in Canada, went to live with her un-nominated hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Young, in a cottage called the Willows in Brockville.¹⁰⁸ Minnie stayed with the Youngs for the duration of the war and evidently became like the daughter the couple never had. Symbolising Minnie’s inclusion in the family, they went so far as to rename the cottage “Wil-Min-Nel” which was a combination of all of their names: Wilmot for “Pop”, “Min” for her and “Nel for Nellie, her “Mummy”.¹⁰⁹ Although not all evacuees would become so entrenched in Canadian family life, the terms with which they used to address and describe their foster parents can point towards their sense of integration.

Despite the seeming good intentions of the foster parents, sometimes tensions developed within households, particularly as evacuees had to become used to a new parenting style. Some childless couples who took in evacuees struggled at times with their “instant children”. According to Dennis Drew, although his foster parents had “their hearts in the right place”, they “really had no idea how to handle young children”.¹¹⁰ Dennis’s foster mother would permit him to walk to a theatre to watch a film and would

¹⁰⁶ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

¹⁰⁷ Veronica Strong-Boag discusses the role and identity of foster parents in her chapter “Negotiating Surrogacy” in *Fostering Nation?* (143-172) and argues that foster parents have always maintained a status on the border as their authenticity as parents is challenged. On one hand, Strong-Boag argues, foster parents are given authenticity by the state and on the other, they struggle to be perceived as “real parents”. Although evacuees’ foster parents had to challenge their authenticity less because of the temporary wartime situation, they did have to craft and negotiate their own role alongside evacuees’ biological parents.

¹⁰⁸ Author’s Evacuee Database.

¹⁰⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Min Hunter nee Roberts”.

¹¹⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Dennis Drew”.

call the theatre to see how long the film had lasted to see if he had been dawdling on the way home. While this could have been suffocating for Dennis, it is a point to wonder whether his foster mother felt a heightened sense of responsibility for her evacuee charges. After all, they were in her home to be protected. Foster parents had to ensure that the children did not fall into any trouble or harm. Dennis's foster sister was often sent to bed without supper because of "talking-back" when she felt she was being treated unfairly. Mary Hume's great-aunt in Stratford, Ontario, was even more suffocating, strict, and rigid. This prevented Mary from attending events such as her friend's Valentine's Day party and even from wearing nail polish.¹¹¹

Some evacuees were fortunate enough to be placed in the same foster home with their sibling, providing them with someone familiar and constantly with them in their new homes. If split up, some foster parents tried to keep the children in contact. Marjorie Everard's brother Ronnie was sent to another foster family although the Mackeys worked to ensure the siblings still saw each other. Ronnie would frequently go to the Mackeys and play ping-pong in their basement with his sister.¹¹² June Jolly lived in Windsor with pediatrician Dr. George White and his family while her sister lived in Riverside, Ontario, and her brother with a family in Michigan. To ensure the children saw each other, their foster parents would annually arrange for the three to get together to go to Bob-Lo Island, an amusement park on an island in the Detroit River. As the park was only open to Canadians for three days a year, it provided a short opportunity for the three children to reunite.¹¹³ Other evacuees had to become acquainted with foster siblings within their new homes. It was not only foster parents that evacuees had to get to know as many families had children of their own. David Simister went to live with Roger Harris and his mother and the two boys, born just twenty days apart, became quick friends and over the course of the war became "like brothers".¹¹⁴ Similarly, although separated from his sister, John

¹¹¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Mary Richardson nee Hume".

¹¹² Author's Evacuee Collection, "Peggy Mackey nee Hill".

¹¹³ "British Child Guest Remembers", Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/29/british-child.html>. As "British child guests" they were given free tickets to the park and could go on all the rides as much as they liked which often included jumping the queue.

¹¹⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Roger Harris".

Macnab formed a friendship with his foster brother who became “like an older brother” who always looked after him when they left the house.¹¹⁵ Chris and Tom Sharp became part of the Williamson family and became close friends with their foster brother Peter and foster sister Mary.¹¹⁶ Although Canadian authorities promised to interview the children in foster families to ensure that they were in agreement with taking in an evacuee, jealousy must have brewed at times. In 1941, Patricia Cave wrote to her parents that her “foster sister” Shirley had told the family that the previous night she had dreamt that they “got RID of the kids” meaning, Patricia and Colin. Patricia reinforced that those were Shirley’s exact words and with hurt feelings wrote “even if she doesn’t like us I know positively she doesn’t she needn’t have said that”.¹¹⁷

As with other members of the household, evacuees also became accustomed to family pets. Pets provided evacuees with companionship and could even act as an emotional outlet for evacuees. As the evacuees in Canada were more likely to come from urban environments, the evacuees may have been less used to having pets, especially large ones. Some may have had a cat back home in Britain but in Canada children were given cats, dogs, birds, horses, and even some cows and goats. Five-year-old Patricia Silver from Bristol, for example, was given a Shetland pony colt named “Nibbles” upon her arrival in Deleau, Manitoba.¹¹⁸ Catherine Anderson’s introduction into her foster family included an enthusiastic greeting from the family’s Border collie “Byng” that immediately bowled her over. Byng apparently decided quickly that it needed to care for Catherine and become her constant companion.¹¹⁹ Children often wrote to their parents about their new or host family pets, writing about them after careful observation and as if they were a member of the family. Elizabeth Paish wrote to her parents about their cat, Bluebird. Sometimes Elizabeth imposed animal characteristics upon Bluebird, such as the time when he caught a partridge, while other times assigned human characteristics to him. On August 14, 1941 Elizabeth explained that “Bluebird has never seen a she-cat

¹¹⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Macnab”.

¹¹⁶ Canadian War Museum (CWM), 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹¹⁷ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹¹⁸ IWM, Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”.

¹¹⁹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

before! So he had not married” and illustrated her attachment to the cat by including in the letter some of his fur as she noted that it had been in her “pocket for a long time”.¹²⁰

Many evacuees had dogs to play with. For Margaret Beal, the host family pet was a highland terrier called Guess, a name that evidently caused some funny misunderstandings. As the stoicism of some children waned, pets like Guess took on the role of confidant.¹²¹ During a particularly difficult period with one host, the family pet provided much needed companionship and comfort for Laila Nardell. At Laila’s next foster home, she similarly found friendship with the family dog, a little Jack Russell terrier called Jigs, as many happy times were spent “cycling round the dykes with Jigs yapping behind”.¹²² Bowlby’s theory of attachment states that children who feel a sense of abandonment often gravitate to stray animals. For example, a *London Free Press* article from September 7, 1940 ran a photo of newly-arrived evacuee Reginald holding a cat. The article explained that the cat was “a stray to which he has taken a great fancy and from which he refused to be parted; they have been having a lot of fun together”.¹²³ Although the photo suggests that Reginald had valiantly saved the cat, it begs the question, who was really saving whom? Pets played a significant role in how the children experienced life in their new homes and are always recalled alongside memories of foster families.

Further shaping the children’s experiences throughout the war within the private space of the home were the relationships that their foster parents formed with their biological parents. It is through such letters that we see the new experience evacuees grappled with in the private space and the ways that foster parents tried to help them not only acclimatize but raise them to their parents’ standards. Correspondence became a space for evacuees’ foster and biological parents to create a co-parenting dynamic. Becoming a foster parent was a great responsibility but no one knew how long the war would last. Yet foster parents across the country were anxious to try to help the children

¹²⁰ IWM, Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

¹²¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Burt Hamilton”.

¹²² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Laila Goodman nee Nardell”.

¹²³ “Is Guest Child at City Home”, *London Free Press*, September 7, 1940.

settle into their new homes. Part of this duty, however, was also ensuring that the children's parents in Britain would be well updated on the progress of the child. So important, the topic was discussed at length in August, 1940, when the provinces held a conference in Ottawa with the Minister of Immigration. It was therefore stressed that host parents should assure the parents that their children were happy and well cared for. This was in the interest of the Allies as "it would ease the minds of the parents in England and thereby strengthen their morale, and consequently assist the war effort". Many foster parents, however, did not need such reminders and immediately took it upon themselves to update and then begin lengthy correspondence with evacuee parents. Letters sent to Mr. Blois from British parents in fact demonstrate this but also begin to shed light on the perspectives of the parents and foster parents. Both groups have been significantly overlooked in evacuation literature. For example, Mrs. Smith from Middlesbrough wrote to Blois to explain that Mr. Hunter had already telegraphed her directly to inform her that her two sons, Ronald and Gordon, had been placed in his home. Similarly, by the time Blois' letter had reached Mrs. Brodie in North Shields, she had already received a letter from both Mr. and Mrs. Coffill and two from her son Raymond.¹²⁴

Correspondence helped parents and foster parents to express assurance and gratitude both in caring for their children but equally, the pleasure foster parents gained by taking in an evacuee. Mrs. Maw from York wrote that her daughter's foster parents Mr. and Mrs. Forbes had written to say "how happy they are to have Margaret with them and how well she had fitted into her new home". Maw continued "We do feel that we can leave her entirely in your care, knowing everything possible will be done for her welfare. We miss her very much indeed but know that we have done the right thing in parting with her for a while and we will work harder than ever for the day of victory when we can welcome our dear ones home again".¹²⁵ After all, British parents were highly cognisant of the fact that by evacuating their children they had become entirely reliant on the host parents and the Canadian government to keep their children safe. But trust they did as

¹²⁴ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Canada, Reception Overseas".

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Mr. Rowlands, father of Allan (eleven), Philip (five) and Peter (eight) wrote that “it is great comfort to us to know that the boys are in perfect safety for the duration of the war and both my wife and myself feel we will never be able to repay both yourself and other Canadian people concerned who are treating our children so kindly”. Similarly, Mr. and Mrs. Batey from Scotland, parents of Evelyn (seven) and Joan (six), wrote to express a sense of relief as “it is a great wrench having them leave us but now they are both in good hands and seem content I am not afraid of their future no matter what may happen here”.¹²⁶

Most of all, these letters illustrate just how fond foster parents became of their evacuee children, and often how the evacuees became equally fond of them. Patricia Silver’s foster family immediately fell for the little girl as her foster mother wrote soon after her arrival that “I know already, only too well that when the day comes when we have to say good-bye to her our hearts will be heavy and sad” and “until that day comes when we can give her back to you, she is our baby”. Sympathising with the sadness felt by Patricia’s biological parents, a few months later her foster parents wrote “we know how your hearts must ache to have her back home with you and in the meantime we are going to soak up all the happiness and pleasure we can of having her with us”.¹²⁷ Although a small sample, these correspondences illustrate the depth and breadth of these transnational letters that served a very important function in the lives of the evacuees. Not only were parents and foster parents able to share stories of progress and growth but they were able to consult each other on parenting matters. Upon the evacuees’ return to Britain and to their biological families, these letters would then serve as a basis for discussions on the experiences. It was a hope that the children would not return to them as total strangers.

¹²⁶ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Canada, Reception Overseas”.

¹²⁷ IWM, Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”. Alice Harper kept the letters from Julia’s mother whilst Patricia Silver’s biological mother kept the letters from her foster mother. Many evacuees still have collections of letters but are understandably guarded, as they are very personal insights into this period of familial separation.

These first letters between evacuees' foster parents to biological parents often turned into long-term correspondence. Although most evacuee collections only contain one side of the correspondence, such letters illustrate not only the experience of being a foster mother to an evacuee but also the experience of being a biological parent who sent their child away. The collection of Julia Kemp contains letters from her biological mother and the letters in Patricia Silver's collection consist of letters from Patricia's foster mother. Although some fathers wrote to their children, no such lengthy and intimate correspondences have been uncovered. This may be for the practical reason that the men may have been in the armed forces or conducting war work; this may also suggest that child-rearing or at very least, the task of maintaining a connection with the child, fell within the role of mothering. One exception was Patricia and Colin Cave's father Rex who seemed to be the parent to reply to most letters. These discussions and negotiations between biological and foster mothers represented a unique type of co-parenting. As the two "mothers" discussed discipline, the child's emotional and physical health, schooling, and even simple character traits, the mothers entered into not only a co-parenting situation but one that was transnational, did not conform to heterogeneous parenting roles, and also one that existed only within correspondence.

Although CORB strongly suggested that foster parents write to the biological parents, the lengthy and frequent letters between the mothers suggest a desire on behalf of the foster mother to attempt to raise the child within the biological parents' parenting preferences. For example, Julia Kemp's mother Lucy wrote to Alice Harper on December 5, 1941 to grant permission for Julia, who had arrived in Canada with her long hair always in braids and with bows, to have her hair cut. Despite this, Lucy closed the letter by hinting that Julia's "Daddy" was very fond of them".¹²⁸ Even across an ocean during wartime, the status of her daughter's hair was important to Julia's mother. Patricia Cave similarly had to request permission from her parents to change her hair. On March 24, 1941 Patricia begged her mother to say whether she could grow her hair long, writing, "please please say yes because when I come back you know that it will not be in the inbetween stage it will be nice and long remember and please say YES". Even though

¹²⁸ IWM, Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

Patricia was well aware of the distance between her and her parents, and the likelihood that she would still be in Canada by the time it grew long, she still requested permission. Patricia spent her next two letters to her parents repeating her request for them to “please please say yes”.¹²⁹ Some foster parents worked hard to maintain parenting standards. Patricia Silver’s foster mother, in a letter from November 1940, reflects her and her husband’s dedication to collaborating with Patricia’s biological parents. She wrote “now our one big job is to try our best to see that your good work is not undone in any way and we will try our best to see that she is returned to you just as you would wish her to be”. Foster parents were conscious that their role was not only to simply care for the children but to raise them to their biological parents’ standards. In a unique letter from a foster father, Patricia and Colin Cave’s foster father reflected upon his wife Marion’s role as foster mother. He wrote:

I was home at lunch one day last week and got quite a smile at Marion both P and C shadow her around the house and obey her infinitely. After lunch ‘now children go upstairs...blow noses, brush teeth and wash hands! Then later as they were going to school – ‘Patricia say your nine times tables all the way to school and be sure you know it. You can be quite sure Blossom, that your substitute is doing a good job and that when the war is over the kid’s holiday will not have deterred their progress more than have been absolutely unavoidable.¹³⁰

Foster parents perceived their role as temporary in which they needed to continue raising the child along lines similar to the wishes of biological parents. Part of that role meant trying to help evacuees not to forget their families back home. Patricia and Colin’s foster father explained in a letter that to do so they “encourage them to speak freely of you and of anything at home so that everything is kept free in their little minds and so avoid any thought of homesickness. Just now they are listening with Marion to the radio bringing real English sounds and I can hear them dancing and joining in the singing”.¹³¹

Over the course of the war as the children grew up, foster mothers often had to explain the “birds and the bees” and puberty to female evacuees, sometimes asking

¹²⁹ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”. It is unclear whether Patricia was given permission.

¹³⁰ IWM Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”.

¹³¹ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

biological parents for instruction. In 1942, Julie Kemp's mother, replying to a letter from Julie's foster mother, wrote: "about babies – please tell Julie whatever is necessary to help keep her abreast of her own development, my views are yours, to steer a middle course between ignorance and precocity". Commending Julie's foster mother she continued "Julie asked me about her 'spots' and I told her that when she was a mammie, a favourite topic of conversation, they would be soft warm places to cuddle her little girl – you have gone further and I find your conversation excellent". Giving her foster mother her blessing, Julie's mother closed with "please go ahead, I have wanted to bring up the matter up myself –it's such a relief to be able to write frankly".¹³² By February 1944, Patricia's foster mother noted that "Pat is changing rapidly now, she seems to be leaving all her childish habits behind her fast, and acting more like a kid of 14 or 15 and I think she is approaching what some folks call a difficult age." Her foster mother's solution to this 'problem' of growing up (puberty) was then described: "we tell her little girls are like little colts, and have to be broken in to do the right thing, or else nobody would ever be able to do anything with them, and that when the colt does what he is told to do, it gets a lump of sugar, and if it is naught and won't do as it is told, it get a whipping, and that is just how little girls have to get trained".¹³³ Although rather a unique analogy of behaviour, such letters allow us to access parenting perceptions.

Punishment and how best to discipline the children also featured in correspondence. In 1940, Patricia and Colin Cave's foster mother explained to their parents that the children were not "deliberately naughty and try very hard to please" but then exemplified her discipline strategy. She wrote "If they do not behave I certainly correct them and they have had many a scolding...and very few off hours of solitude upstairs. I do not think it is fair to spoil children. I find I have to be the disciplinarian in this family so I keep strictly to the set rules".¹³⁴ This particular parenting approach may

¹³² IWM, Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp". No letters reveal similar discussions for male evacuees. It is likely that some disagreements over the foster parents' parenting techniques arose in letters. Trying to discuss such sensitive matters thousands of miles apart, by letters that sometimes were lost at sea, would have been difficult. More on biological parents' critiques of foster parenting appears later in this chapter.

¹³³ IWM, Documents, 15995, "Private Papers of Miss P M Silver".

¹³⁴ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

have been entirely in keeping with that of the biological parents but clashes between Canadian and British parenting methods could have easily cropped up. For instance, Marion described a more serious incident: “about 2 weeks ago I spanked Colin and I believe they were surprised youngsters but it was infinitely more upsetting for me. Colin was annoyed with Patricia and raced across this busy road... A little while previously he had refused to cross properly...and raced across on his own. I talked to him like a Dutch uncle then but he evidently wasn’t sufficiently impressed. I was so terrified this time however that I spanked him. He is a little brick too. He just bit his lips and slipped upstairs to have a quite little cry and later when I went up was very ready to put his arms around me and tell me he would never do it again. I felt a perfect beast really and had shakey [sic] knees all night but I had to keep him safe...I don’t think I shall ever have to speak to him about crossing a road again.”¹³⁵ Although the incident was remedied, Marion’s description of the event reflected her sense that she was entirely responsible for the children’s wellbeing. No harm could come to them. By comparison, Patricia Silver’s foster mother described Patricia in 1940 as “a great kid just chuck full of love and affection for everybody, no whining or hollering because she can’t have this or that”. Commending Patricia’s biological parents, her foster mother wrote “she is a credit to you and her breed, and if you could only hear some of the compliments and remarks that have been said about you as to the way in which you have raised her your chests would swell to the busting point”.¹³⁶ Even if evacuees did hold on to their instructions imparted on departure that they should always be on their best behaviour, over the years, their home lives in Canada just became their daily reality and efforts to keep up appearances maybe have fallen to the wayside.

As well as acting as a space in which foster and biological mothers could discuss the raising of the child, correspondence was also a place for both to discuss the child’s development. This had the practical implication that the parents could gather a sense of how the child was fairing emotionally and progressing. Letters reveal that foster parents recorded children becoming “Canadianised”. Sometimes these were small things such as

¹³⁵ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹³⁶ IWM, Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”.

in November 1940 when Colin Cave's foster parents explained that he had "mastered the art of fastening his laced shoes".¹³⁷ Just the month before his foster parents had written "he is rather destructive...but every week he is becoming more of a little boy and more careful with things". These changes would have been very noticeable for young evacuees; it must have been painful for evacuees' parents to hear how their children were growing up without being part of it. Foster parents often noted the ways in which, in their perspective, the evacuee children were acclimatising to Canada. Patricia Silver's foster mother reported on September 17, 1940 for instance, that Patricia was already "beginning to change some of her English sayings for Canadian ones, such as 'I guess so' for 'I suppose so', 'quit it' for 'stop it' etc. so she will likely be a regular little Canadian by the time she goes home". By November, 1940 Patricia's foster mother noted that "you will have a little Canadian returned instead of a little English girl I am afraid, for she has just about completely lost what English accent she had and she seems to get hold of some new Canadian saying almost every day. She talks about nickels and dimes instead of pennies and half pennies and she chews chewing gum and eats popcorn and peanuts just like a native".¹³⁸ Furthermore, many children were quite young and therefore letters from foster mothers often describe the child in terms of simply "growing up". In 1944 for example, Jean Ingham's foster mother Mrs. Laidlaw wrote to Jean's mother in Britain and explained that "Jean is a very nice girl and has given us no trouble at all. She likes to go her own way and does not do anything that I do not approve of...there is one thing that troubles me and that is that she has no idea of the value of money...I have tried to teach her but I do not think I have made much of an impression".¹³⁹ The parenting methods utilised by foster parents would have shaped the evacuees' home lives.

Homesickness featured in evacuees' letters as well as they wrote to their parents of wanting to return home. Some children like Elizabeth Paish were more expressive in their early letters about their longing for home, particularly as they adjusted to the

¹³⁷ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

¹³⁸ IWM, Documents, 15995, "Private Papers of Miss P M Silver".

¹³⁹ IWM, Documents, 15368, "Private Papers of Miss J Ingham".

familial separation. On July 21, 1940 Elizabeth closed a letter with “P.S. I have been homesick at night on the ship and two nights here”.¹⁴⁰ The sentiment remained a few days later when on July 24, she wrote “I do hope that the war will end soon, and we can come back to you”.¹⁴¹ For some other evacuees, their desire to return home increased with early hints of the war’s end. On February 1943 in which Patricia Cave pleaded for tickets home writing:

I do so much want to come home. There is no danger of invasion now and you say there are very few air raids and I want to come back. This is not just a homesick fit but it is real. Colin forgets all about England and you...If you don’t get the tickets I am sure I will swim home. I don’t know about Colin but meet me in Bristol harbour when I get there. If you don’t want me to swim please get the tickets.¹⁴²

Whether Patricia was being melodramatic for effect or whether she was speaking the truth about Colin, it surely would have been a difficult letter for their parents to receive. There may have been some truth in Patricia’s sentiment, however, as some evacuees grew ever-more distant from their families. As time went on, some evacuees wrote fewer letters to their parents. By 1943, Colin had stopped writing to his parents regularly, causing his parents to try to goad responses out of him. On March 1, 1943 his father wrote that they knew that Colin had gone to school as a boarder but wrote “I wonder if you are going to tell us anything about it”. By March 23, it seems Colin’s letter writing had not improved. His father wrote that Colin’s foster mother had told them that it had been a cold winter and that Patricia had said that she had mild frostbite in both cheeks. In another hope of getting a response, he then asked “have you had any frostbite?” On the same day, their father wrote to Patricia “do you know it’s rather terrible that I have not written to you for three weeks but I have been very busy. On the other hand, we have had no letters from Canada for three weeks now”.¹⁴³ As time went on, sometimes letter writing became a chore. Despite being in the same foster home, Muriel Curtis routinely

¹⁴⁰ IWM, Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

¹⁴¹ IWM, Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

¹⁴² IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

wrote home whereas her brother neglected to.¹⁴⁴ By the time evacuees had been away for home for three or four years, the effect was in some instances starting to show. Elizabeth noted on February 20, 1944 that “our letters seem to be very short these days, and I often wonder how you make your letters long and interesting”.¹⁴⁵ Even for elder evacuees, the longer the war drifted on, the less “new” things the evacuees had to write home about. The obligation to write home however remained.

Some evacuees used drawings in their letters to convey their understanding and conceptualisation of the war. Anthony Paish included drawings in his letter as soon as he left Britain. While writing a letter during the ocean voyage he chose to draw a picture of the ship, marking the location of his room below deck and the spot from where he was writing the letter. He then included a drawing of an airplane, complete with an RAF roundel, and noted that the “plane came over us once”. This was Anthony’s way of depicting his sense of space and the journey to his parents. Even once safely in Canada, Anthony’s letters continued to include drawings such as one on July 17, 1940 to his father upon which he drew a De Havilland flamingo plane. By September 15, 1940 Anthony was including full drawings of war scenes with ships, planes, and parachutes in his letters to his parents, reflecting his interest in the war. Later on in the war, Anthony began to use his drawings for a different purpose. By 1942 Anthony began to include drawings in his correspondence for his little brother Chris. These often included pictures of oil tankers, modern cars, commercial planes, submarines, tanks, and fighter planes. These drawings soon became a method of communicating with his very young brother and Anthony’s letters suggest that Chris reciprocated with drawings of his own. In May 1943 Anthony embedded a message directed at Chris within a letter to his parents, writing “Dear Christopher, thank you very much for your letter of May 1st that you sent me. I like the picture you painted for us a lot. The boat looks like an aircraft carrier. Do you know what that is it’s a ship what a great flat deck for carrying aeroplanes”.¹⁴⁶ Anthony closed the letter with his own drawing of an aircraft carrier. By January 1944,

¹⁴⁴ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Joyce Boldero”.

¹⁴⁵ IWM, Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

¹⁴⁶ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

Anthony thanked Chris for his Christmas card depicting two flying boats and ships and noted “I think you are able to draw quite well now but here is a hint. Point 1. Try to do the wings coming out of the side of the plane and down (this is not easy but it will come gradually) point 2 remember to put in the tale you are much better at drawing than I was when I was as old as you, so keep it up!”¹⁴⁷ These letters were an opportunity for Anthony to provide some brotherly advice and share his knowledge of the war. The drawings and pictures of the war provided a space in which Anthony and his brother could communicate, not necessarily with great meaning but with the effect of maintaining their brotherly communication across the vast distance. Other evacuees like Tom Sharp included drawings that reflected their conceptualisation of the war. Ten-year-old Tom Sharp included a drawing at the end one of his letters written in 1941 - an impressively accurate outline (but with shaky lines) of Britain. Tom had a good geographic conceptualisation of his spatial distance from his native country, and was even able to accurately locate his mother in Cumbria and his father in London. Tom drew his father in London as a man with the caption “daddy saying get down with Hitler”.¹⁴⁸ In Tom’s eyes his father, although not in the army, was directly fighting Britain’s battle and would beat Hitler himself. “Home” was still very much on Tom’s mind even after being away for over a year. Whether evacuees included drawings in their letters as a way to add a war-themed narrative or as a way of communicating themselves, these drawings are valuable for their depiction of the child’s interpretation of war. Although physically removed from Britain, the war, and how their families in Britain were fighting, it still very much occupied the minds of many evacuees. The evacuees used the war as a point of conversation, and used their letters to demonstrate their knowledge of the war and their authority over shaping their own narrative of it. By extension, such news kept thoughts of “home” in their minds.

While evacuees wrote letters to their parents, to maintain a sibling relationship, some evacuees wrote letters to their siblings back in Britain who did not join them in Canada. Sources, particularly for CORB, do not include information on the siblings with whom

¹⁴⁷ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

¹⁴⁸ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

evacuees parted by coming to Canada. Yet evacuee letters and post-war sources reveal that evacuees had siblings at home who were too young, too old, or rejected from evacuation. The five Curtis children, for instance, left behind their elder brother Edward who was in the forces and a younger brother Douglas who was too young to be evacuated.¹⁴⁹ Les Oliver also left behind a younger brother who, at the age of eight was old enough to be evacuated but for some reason was not.¹⁵⁰ Maureen Burke and her two sisters left their sixteen-year-old brother Tom in England. The sisters never wrote to Tom and they felt one family letter would suffice.¹⁵¹ Anthony Paish routinely wrote to his younger brother known as “Chrissie”. Despite being young himself, Anthony was clearly aware that his letter writing to his younger sibling needed to be age appropriate and therefore his letters include short notes and even drawings. For example, Anthony explained that “there is a nice Persian cat here, called Bluebird, he looked like this” and he included a drawing of the cat. On June 1, 1941 Anthony recognised that his brother was growing up, much like himself (although he still printed rather than used cursive writing like in other letters) as he asked “I am glad you had a nice birthday and that you like our presents. Can you read yet?” In a similar vein, Anthony would write to his parents about Chrissie and his progress. On February 28, 1943 he noted that “Chrissie seems to be getting much older, both in age and understanding”. By May, 1943 he wrote “please thank Chris for me for the lovely pictures he sent us. I like the ones of the barge steamship with five funnels best I think. He is getting better at doing aeroplanes too”.¹⁵² Other children like Stella Marion Bates, who had a one-year-old brother as she departed, left behind siblings who were even too young to remember them.¹⁵³ Similarly, the older siblings of evacuees in Britain tried to maintain connections. Brenda Cooling’s brother John wrote her not only to report war news as he detailed his involvement in D- Day.

¹⁴⁹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Joyce Boldero”.

¹⁵⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”.

¹⁵¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Maureen Burke”.

¹⁵² IWM, Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

¹⁵³ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Stella Bates nee Pickering”.

However, he then reflected its personal importance to him as he noted “It has brought your homecoming much closer, I would go through a thousand invasions for that”.¹⁵⁴

With the help of their foster parents, evacuees sometimes used photographs, parcels, telegrams, and the radio to maintain a connection with their families throughout the war. These parcels had the practical use of transporting necessary goods such as clothing. Unable to send money to Canada to provide maintenance for their children, British parents could send parcels of clothing. If properly labeled as being sent to an “evacuee”, the parcels would arrive free from tax. Yet parents in Britain also sent parcels for birthdays and holidays. In July 1940 Elizabeth Paish thanked her parents for some books and a pencil. Sometimes presents were chosen particularly for their relation to Britain. On May 8, 1941 Elizabeth Paish explained that they had received a parcel from their Grandmother containing four Puffin books including *The Story of Saxon and Norman Britain*.¹⁵⁵ In other instances, parents tried to send parcels to their children strictly for pleasure. In 1940, Allan Green thanked his mother for his parcel which included a “developing tank and the telemag”. The compass had been removed from the parcel, however; according to Allan “perhaps the censor took it because it is not allowed”.¹⁵⁶ Parcels too were often sent from Canada to Britain and often included products in much shortage and demand in Britain. Food could be sent from Canada to Britain but food could not be sent out of Britain.

Photographs were similarly a commodity that moved between the foster and biological homes as a method of maintaining contact. Parents with children in Nova Scotia received photos upon their children’s arrival in the province yet many other foster parents also sent photos. Of the surviving collections, Julia Kemp’s foster family sent the most photographs to her mother. Not only did they send photos of their house, pointing out which room was Julia’s, but they sent many throughout the course of the war that

¹⁵⁴ IWM, Documents, 1170, “Private Papers of J H Cooling”.

¹⁵⁵ IWM, Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

¹⁵⁶ IWM, Documents, 9928, “Canadian Evacuee’s Instructions, 1940”.

capture her physical growth and also reflect her integration into their family.¹⁵⁷ Even if foster parents could afford to send photos, there was often the problem of supply. In April 1944, Patricia Silver's foster mother explained that she had been "trying for weeks, yes months, to get another film and get a snap or two but films out here are scarcer than hen's teeth...you can take it from us that she is not the little tot you said goodbye to almost four years ago".¹⁵⁸ Photos of their children would have been much desired and upon receipt, much appreciated and beloved by biological parents. Yet photographs similarly benefited the children upon arrival. Margaret Burt Hamilton looked forward to receiving photos from her parents and similarly her foster parents, Mom and Pop Carter, tried to send a "pictorial record" of her progress.¹⁵⁹ Patricia Silver was equally happy when a photo of her mother arrived in October, 1940. Her foster parents wrote to her biological mother about Patricia's reaction: "when we gave her the picture of her Mummy and asked her 'who is this, Pat' she just shouted 'ohhh my mummy!'" and her eyes just sparkled and when she settled down she said 'you know that is not a very good picture of my mummy, she looks as if she is going to cry'. We told her that she could not expect her mummy to be very happy while her baby is so far away from her".¹⁶⁰ These visual images were important for parents to see how their children were growing up and changing but for evacuees, the photos were to help them keep images of their family in their minds. This would become very important for when the evacuees returned home after the war.

As part of the CORB programme, evacuee children sent one free telegram per month to their parents. The same courtesy was extended to their parents. The originator of the service was Sir Edward Wilshaw, the chairman of *Cable and Wireless Communications* and evacuees were given a list of pre-set telegrams to choose from. In March, 1941 CORB evacuees in Canada were each sent a notification from the Pacific Cable Board in Montreal that the fixed telegram texts had been extended. New texts included: "Thanks for nice letter. Take care of yourselves. Love" and "Sending photos. All well here. Love".

¹⁵⁷ IWM, Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

¹⁵⁸ IWM, Documents, 15995, "Private Papers of Miss P M Silver".

¹⁵⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Burt Hamilton".

¹⁶⁰ IWM, Documents, 15995, "Private Papers of Miss P M Silver".

The service enabled children to keep in touch with their families but the pre-set text was limiting. Although more limited on space than letters, cables allowed for a faster connection between evacuees and their families. Private evacuees were not given the same free service. Sometimes cables were reserved only for special occasions like birthdays. Similarly, on rare occasions British parents sent Airgraph messages to their children. Individuals were given a piece of paper to write their message. In 1944, Les Oliver's younger brother Terry sent birthday wishes on behalf of the family and drew a picture of an aerodrome where Les was working. The toll of being separated for four years showed as Terry asked "I have a bike now so that I can [sic] riding with dad. Can you ride a bike Les?"¹⁶¹ Starting in 1941 in Canada, such air graph messages were copied onto film which would then be flown to Canada where it was copied and reproduced in its original size. Airgraph was marketed as being a faster mode of communication.¹⁶² Some CORB children like Patricia Silver were not entirely satisfied with the telegraph method of communication. In September 1940, her foster mother explained that her foster father had "given her a cable because she wanted to talk to her parents". Although she "seemed satisfied" she said "I would rather talk to them on the telephone, this way is a silly way to try to talk."¹⁶³ Julie Kemp was most fortunate that her father was in the Navy and in 1943 he arrived in America. This provided Julie with the unique opportunity to receive a telephone call from her father. She wrote to her "mummie" "I talked to Daddy on the telephone and I asked him how many more days he had in New York. I wanted to hear him laugh".¹⁶⁴ Letters, parcels, photographs, and telegrams were unable to provide Julie with what she really wanted: to *hear* her father.

Another unique opportunity to communicate with their parents came to some CORB evacuees in the form of radio broadcasts. It would never have been possible for all CORB evacuees to have participated, but some evacuees were taken to studios to be recorded.

¹⁶¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Les Oliver".

¹⁶² Airgraph mail was created by Eastman Kodak Company in the 1930s. In the war, it was used to reduce the bulk of letters sent between soldiers overseas and the home front. "Airgraph Letters 1941", British Pathé, accessed June 5, 2015, <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/airgraph-letters>.

¹⁶³ IWM, Documents, 15995, "Private Papers of Miss P M Silver".

¹⁶⁴ IWM, Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

Evacuee parents in Britain were then taken to studios to be recorded and these recorded messages from British parents would be broadcasted on the radio in Canada. Children were notified that their parents had been recorded and then they had to listen carefully for their own parents. Patricia Silver's parents were recorded by the BBC, their message broadcasted on July 16 and rebroadcasted by the CBC on July 19.¹⁶⁵ Although some children were unable to talk back to their parents, there was an emotional value in hearing their parents' voices.¹⁶⁶ Grace Blackman was in hospital when her mother was due to be broadcasted so the nurses took her to the nurses' residence so she could hear the broadcast. Grace even recalled many years later she that remembered answering all of her mother's questions: "are you being a good girl?", "Oh yes" Grace answered even though her mother would not be able to hear her.¹⁶⁷ Joan Ambridge was taken to Vancouver to listen to a recording of her parents; she became very emotional as soon as she heard "Hello Joan".¹⁶⁸ Other evacuees like Margaret Beal were chosen to actually speak with their parents via the radio for approximately two minutes. Margaret apparently fell in love with the microphone in that moment, a love that led her to radio and television work in her later life.¹⁶⁹ Both parties would be brought into their respective studios and these broadcasts were made as part of the "Children Calling Home" radio series.¹⁷⁰ The series allowed children in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and in the United States to talk to their parents.¹⁷¹ The broadcasts were for the benefit of parents and evacuees but also captured public interest as "a weekly tear compeller".¹⁷² This inevitably affected some listeners as a diarist for Mass Observation recorded that he felt

¹⁶⁵ IWM, Documents, 15995, "Private Papers of Miss P M Silver".

¹⁶⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Burt Hamilton".

¹⁶⁷ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Grace Wilson nee Blackman".

¹⁶⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Joan Ambridge".

¹⁶⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Burt Hamilton".

¹⁷⁰ IWM, Sound Recording, 460, British Children's Christmas Broadcast, 1940.

¹⁷¹ For an example of an American broadcast see, "Children Calling home 1941". British Pathé, accessed May 1, 2015, <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/children-calling-home/query/Evacuate>.

¹⁷² Nicholas John Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign against American "Neutrality" in World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 92.

uncomfortable upon hearing parents speak to their evacuated children in Canada because “they seem too intimate for open broadcasting”.¹⁷³

Two such radio broadcasts still exist, one at the Imperial War Museum and the other is hosted by the BBC website. Prior to the formation of the database it was impossible to understand these broadcasts in context. The broadcaster introduced the children by names but there was no sense of who these children actually were. With the database, these radio clips can now be included in the historical record for these particular children. Moreover, although the children exercised their voices in their letters, it is in these radio broadcasts that we can, for the first time, actually *hear* their voices. The Imperial War Museum clip was recorded in December 1940 to mark the children’s first Christmas away from home. It recorded children in America, Canada, and South Africa speaking with their parents with the efforts of NBC, CBC, and the BBC.¹⁷⁴ The announcer opened the broadcast opened stating “here are the voices of British children exchanging greetings with their parents. Children and parents are thousands of miles apart but through radio, they will be reunited for a few moments of warm words of Christmas cheer”. From the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Toronto, the announcer introduced Bill Welsh who begins to speak with an already acquired Canadian accent, his mother with a clear Scottish accent. They talk about Christmas Day and his mother told him to give their love to his foster parents. He then piped up to say “I’m workin’ maw” just as his mother introduced his father who asked how he was getting on with sports because “he sees he’s become a rugby player”. The announcer cuts in to reintroduce Bill’s work, for his mother to simply reply “that’s grand” and then says that both his “grannies” are listening. Bill wishes “all the folks” a happy Christmas as his segment ended. Although the broadcast illustrated that Bill’s daily life had become Canadianised, particularly with his part-time work and new sports, the clip was not much more than a nice example of a Christmas message. With the database, it is clear that “Bill Welsh” was actually William Welsh, CORB number 3688.¹⁷⁵ The database reveals detailed information about him; he was

¹⁷³ MO, Diarist 5236-18-27.

¹⁷⁴ IWM Sound Recording, 460, British Children’s Christmas Broadcast, 1940.

¹⁷⁵ Author’s Evacuee Database.

Roman Catholic from Dundee, Scotland, who went to live in the nominated home of his aunt Mrs. Cunningham in Toronto. Yet the database also reveals information about him after the broadcast. In September 1941, almost a year after the broadcast, his aunt asked Canadian authorities for Bill to be removed from her home. He then went to live with Mrs. Connhour until the following August when he moved to the Bradleys because he “caused too much trouble”. Bill finally moved to the Hallaghars for the same reason. In total, Bill moved through four foster homes and finally he became too difficult to handle and unwilling to be guided” so his parents agreed for him to return to Britain in May 1943 at the age of sixteen.¹⁷⁶

The broadcast maintained on the BBC website opened with an announcer in a studio in Ottawa who introduced Polly and Geoffrey Carton, aged eight and five, on July 27, 1941.¹⁷⁷ Greeting each other, Polly’s mother asked “how are you?” to which Polly answered with a slight Canadian accent that still sounded particularly English as she said “Alright, thank you!”. Her mother asked about Polly’s piano lessons and then asked if she was learning French, which Polly replied “yes”. From the short clip not much can initially be extracted. From the database however, it is clear that “Polly” was also known as “Shirley” Carton and she and Geoffrey arrived in Ottawa in July 1940 with Byron House. This explains how Geoffrey would have been just four years old upon departure as private evacuees. That the young children of Byron House were housed together under the care of their British headmistress explains Shirley’s ability to retain some of her accent. This is a clear contrast from Bill Welsh. Further, the thick Scottish accent of Bill’s mother contrasted with the clear, upper-class English accent of Polly and Geoffrey’s mother. Geoffrey and Polly returned to Britain on October 17, 1944.¹⁷⁸ In 1941, British Pathé recorded film footage of British parents as they spoke to their

¹⁷⁶ Author’s Evacuee Database.

¹⁷⁷ “Evacuees in World War 2”, BBC School Radio, accessed February 20, 2015, http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips/eyewitness/evacuees_radio.

The photograph associated with the clip is of a little girl (looking remarkably like Shirley temple) and a boy in front of an NBC microphone. Because Polly describes her dress as “blue with white spots” we can assume it is not their photo displayed as the girl wears a dark dress with no apparent spots.

¹⁷⁸ Geoffrey and Polly departed Britain on June 26, 1940 aboard the *Duchess of Atholl*. They both left Canada and sailed on the *Rangitiki* after departing from New York. *Ancestry*.

children in the “Children Calling Home” series. The Pathé video archive notes that the film is of parents speaking to their children in the United States of America. Part way through the reel the announcer introduces Mr. and Mrs. Spooner who begin to speak with their son, John.¹⁷⁹ Yet the database reveals that John Spooner was in fact a Canadian evacuee. John, CORB 1159, was eleven years old from Chelmsford, Essex, and lived in Manitoba. Around the time of the broadcast he moved from the Ensicks in East Kildonan to the home of Mrs. Hutchings in Winnipeg, although the reason for the move was left blank. In the first few words of their conversation, John’s mother asked “how are you” to which he replied “I weigh ninety-pounds now” to which his mother replied “that’s splendid”. John then told his father “it was twenty-eight below yesterday” and the presenter joked “that’s a long way down, isn’t it”? Through his comments, John drew on Canada as a nation of plentiful food but, to Britons, one with shockingly cold winters. With the database, such radio clips can be contextualised, the children can be identified, and historians can gain better insight into their experiences in Canada.¹⁸⁰

As these radio broadcasts were only offered to some CORB evacuees and to an even much more limited extent to private evacuees, some children took it upon themselves (with their foster parents’ financial assistance) to make personalised records for their parents. These would be recorded in a studio and would then be sent over to be played on a gramophone. In the case of the Walker family, both parents in Britain and children (William, thirteen and Robert, twelve) in Moncton, New Brunswick, participated in the recordings. On June 8, 1941 the boys’ parents went to the studio, their father recording “It’s just fine speaking to you over two thousand miles away. News from you is a great

¹⁷⁹ The film description notes in five places that British parents are speaking to their “children in the United States of America”. That Canadian evacuees are included in the reel is only momentary hinted at in the beginning of the reel as the narrator notes “one of the broadcasts between England and the American continent which momentarily reunites parents and evacuated children is shown in these intimate studio scenes”. At the very end, the presenter says “Goodbye New York and Goodbye Canada”. “Children Calling home 1941”. British Pathé, accessed May 1, 2015. <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/children-calling-home/query/Evacuate>.

¹⁸⁰ The database also reveals additional information about the evacuees’ experiences. John Spooner for instance, had his tonsils removed in February 1943, and returned home to Britain in February 1945. Author’s Evacuee Database.

comfort to us. Work hard at school and enjoy yourselves at play. Best of luck”.¹⁸¹ A few months later in October the boys recorded messages. As it was October 31, Bill explained the tradition of Halloween and then noted “we have been in Canada now four hundred and thirty-four days, but it just seems like a bolt of greased streaked lightening”. The boys were able to speak to their parents through the BBC in early 1942 but then the only other record in the collection was from August 6, 1945. According to Bill, the record was to commemorate their fifth anniversary of leaving home: “Yes, just five years ago today, at one o’clock on Tuesday, August the sixth, we said goodbye to you”. That he had remembered not just the day but the hour symbolised the extent to which the separation was etched in his mind. Poignantly summarising their separation and the impact of evacuation Bill continued:

Little did we know at that parting that that goodbye was meant for half a decade. Nor did we realize what experiences lay ahead of us, or of you. Although it is regrettable that you did not have the opportunity to watch us grow through the plastic stage of our teens, and showed great faith in placing in Mrs. Lutz’ hands the task of molding our lives and characters through that difficult period in anybody’s life, I know that on the brighter side of the picture, you realize, among other things, that it has been the means of culminating one of your most cherished desires, that we receive a thorough and complete education, ending in matriculation standing for both of us.¹⁸²

In short, although separation was difficult, evacuation was worth it. Evacuees were very fortunate to be able to maintain frequent communication with their parents and family members. This was an important part of keeping the children connected to their British home life. Letters, parcels, and technological methods of communication, which included photographs, radio broadcasts, and phonograph records, were all utilised as unique ways of maintaining meaningful transnational connections during wartime and greatly affected the children’s private lives in Canada. It is impossible to estimate how many evacuees maintained frequent communication with their families in Britain, especially as the war dragged on and evacuees became older and potentially more engrained in Canadian life. Yet to

¹⁸¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Rob and William Walker”.

¹⁸² Ibid.

those who did, this communication would have served to keep the image of “home” alive in their minds.

The evacuees’ health, something personal and individual, also formed a major part of their private lives while in Canada. In caring for these children, foster parents also had to protect their physical health. On the most basic level, foster parents for both CORB and private evacuees were responsible for providing clothing for the children. All evacuees were limited in what they could bring with them due to space restrictions but some evacuees arrived with few items because their families could not afford an abundance of clothing prior to leaving Britain.¹⁸³ W. Gordon Jones, for example, had to start school in his English uniform with short pants.¹⁸⁴ The evacuees’ clothing often acted as an easily identifiable marker of their “differentness”. Even if evacuees arrived with all items on CORB’s packing list, most children still needed to be kitted out with appropriate winter clothing. In letters to their parents, evacuees often reported on their clothing as the seasons changed. Elizabeth Paish, for example, wrote in November 1940 that “the winter is really here now as there is quite a lot of snow, I have got a lovely ski suit, it is green, with a brown fur collar, Mrs. Wilson has given me some skates”.¹⁸⁵ The Children’s Aid Society and the Red Cross often provided articles such as winter coats, leggings, and hats.¹⁸⁶ For private evacuees, the University of Toronto started a clothing exchange at which individuals from the university, outside friends, and community members could hand in their children’s “outgrowns” for evacuees.¹⁸⁷ Dresses, coats, underwear, suits, skates, “rubbers”, and galoshes changed hand frequently and by November, 1941, “268 garments had been passed to English families and forty children with foster parents”.

¹⁸³ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Canada, Reception Overseas: Nova Scotia”.

¹⁸⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “W Gordon Jones”.

¹⁸⁵ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

¹⁸⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Grace Wilson nee Blackman”.

¹⁸⁷ TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Offer from University of Toronto”.

Ultimately, the committee framed this clothing exchange as “a very practical and effective form of war work”.¹⁸⁸

Foster parents were also responsible for the evacuees’ health by ensuring that they received the correct nutrition. Compared to Britain, Canada had an abundance of food including fresh fruit and vegetables.¹⁸⁹ The change in diet and portion size became an issue for some evacuees like Catherine Anderson who simply could not finish a whole dinner meal, which left her sitting at the table alone long after everyone else had finished.¹⁹⁰ The problem became a great concern to her foster mother who even wrote to Catherine’s mother for advice. By contrast, Julie Kemp flourished with a never-ending supply of food. She loved her food so much that Julie’s foster mother reported to her parents that Julie’s body was “as solid as it could be, no flabby flesh about her, just solid meat and to see her strutting along with her square shoulders and the swagger, one would think she was on her way to knock that smacker off old Hitler’s mug”.¹⁹¹ A year later, Julie was still “growing like a weed” and was losing her baby teeth. Other foster mothers like Min Roberts’ came up with health routines. Min, for example, was forced to lay out naked in the home’s porch for ten minutes every day to catch the sun in the summer months.¹⁹² Foster parents monitored the children’s growth but so too did the evacuees themselves. After measuring her friend around the waist, Elizabeth Paish wrote to the parents that “she is 28, while I am 24”.¹⁹³ By August, 1940 Patricia Cave was already proudly reporting her growth to her parents as she wrote, “there is something I call my spare tire. This is really extra weight around the tummy because of eating a lot.” Three weeks later, Patricia claimed that she had “gained 9 pounds in weight and half an inch in

¹⁸⁸ TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Offer from University of Toronto”.

¹⁸⁹ For more on food availability and rationing in Canada see Ian Mosby, *Food Will Win the War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014) and Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War* (New York: Penguin Press, 2013) for the British context.

¹⁹⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”

¹⁹¹ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

¹⁹² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Min Hunter nee Roberts”.

¹⁹³ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

height”. Equally she became immensely proud of her enormous feet.¹⁹⁴ This Canadian health regime seemed to work as evacuees were depicted as growing up like bean stalks. In one speech, Geoffrey Shakespeare even noted the benefits to CORB evacuees as he reported “most of them have grown 2” or 3” in height and put on 20-30 lbs in weight since they arrived in Canada 18 months ago”. One girl of fourteen, he noted, broke the record by putting on fifty-six pounds in weight. Shakespeare ultimately attributed this success not only to Canadian food but to an “absence of bombing and the possibility of uninterrupted sleep at night”.¹⁹⁵

When evacuees did fall ill, foster parents had to care for them. Almost every evacuee would have had a cough, cold, or other minor illness during their time in Canada. Many minor illnesses would not have necessitated specialist medical treatment. Foster parents drew on home remedies such as Colin Cave’s foster mother who made him take a mustard bath for a cold.¹⁹⁶ Some cases did require medical attention and Canada had promised evacuees access to health care. Anthony Curtis had such a bad case of poison ivy that the Winnipeg Medical School used him for a study.¹⁹⁷ In the current literature, the only information on evacuees’ illnesses comes from sparse anecdotes, meaning it has been impossible to trace evacuees’ health care while in Canada.¹⁹⁸ The database, however, enables an in-depth case study of the medical conditions that evacuees experienced. Selecting the first 400 CORB evacuees to arrive provides a sufficient sample. Out of those 400 children, 119 children had 141 issues that required medical treatment. (Figure 20) The most common were children who required dental treatment (thirty-five cases). Similarly, sixteen children had issues with their sight and/or required glasses and others with their sinuses and ears.

¹⁹⁴ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁹⁵ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Speeches and General Surveys”.

¹⁹⁶ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”. Many Canadian parents had their own home remedies to keep their children healthy and prevent disease. Mona Gleason in “Lost Voices, Lost Bodies?” in *Lost Kids*, 147 highlights the case of one father who would paint his daughter’s necks with iodine to prevent avoid sore throats.

¹⁹⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Anthony Curtis”.

¹⁹⁸ Historians like Bilson and Starns have been unable to provide estimates for evacuees’ health issues.

Next prevalent were contagious illnesses such as measles, rubella, mumps, chicken pox, and scarlet fever. Anthony Paish experienced a measles outbreak while his sister Elizabeth had a slight attack of the mumps as she wrote to her parents in January 1943: “On Tuesday night I woke up with a terrible pain in my right cheek so I went down and told Mrs. Wilson. From then in, I had mumps”.¹⁹⁹ Such illnesses often required hospital treatment. John Macnab caught scarlet fever, was hospitalised for three weeks, and sustained permanent ear problems.²⁰⁰ Recovery in hospital often became long periods of boredom. While in hospital for mumps, Elizabeth noted she had to share the infirmary with Duncan Ferguson (another evacuee) and expressed disappointment writing, “I do wish I could knit properly, I feel so ashamed at not being able to when a boy of six can knit as well as I can”.²⁰¹ Despite CORB’s best efforts to reject children with the condition, two children within the case study developed epilepsy. Raymond Martin, who was living in Montreal, developed epilepsy and had to be sent to Woodstock Hospital for specialist care in July 1941. He continued to receive hospital care and had to move to a foster family in Woodstock.²⁰² Another child developed tuberculosis and was sent to a sanatorium. When illnesses required quarantine, evacuees like Winnifred Burke had to be separated from their siblings and foster families. Eight-year-old Victor Harmsworth, for instance, spent his first six months in Canada in hospital until May 1941 because one lung appeared clouded on the X-ray taken on his arrival so he was kept in a Preventorium and was separated from his brother.²⁰³ Maureen Burke recalled going to visit her sister at hospital but only being able to wave to her from the hospital grounds.²⁰⁴ In his postwar work, John Bowlby argued that lengthy hospital stays that separated children from their

¹⁹⁹ IWM, Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”. IWM, Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

²⁰⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Macnab”.

²⁰¹ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

²⁰² Author’s Evacuee Database. Raymond had to leave behind his sister Gladys who was three years younger.

²⁰³ Author’s Evacuee Database. When discharged, the foster family of Victor’s brother took him into their home in British Columbia.

²⁰⁴ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Maureen Burke”.

parents could cause serious psychological harm and distress to the children although no comment of such stress appears in CORB case files.²⁰⁵

Some medical issues required surgery. Out of the sample group, seventy-four children underwent surgery. (Figure 21) The overwhelming majority were to remove evacuees' tonsils and adenoids. For evacuees like Peter Horlock this meant being "obligated" to eat lots of ice cream.²⁰⁶ Jean Ingham made sure to write in her diary about her unpleasant experience of having her tonsils out. Being given ether, according to Jean, was horrible as "there were wheels going round all over" and when she came to, "they stuck a needle in [her] to make [her] sleep".²⁰⁷ An opportunity not to be missed, when the Doctor came in the next morning Jean had him sign her autograph book. Audrey Buxton was also given plenty of ice cream and ginger ale for recovery. Yet two weeks later, Audrey experienced a haemorrhage that required middle of the night cauterising and longer convalescence. Later in the war, Audrey was also hospitalised in isolation with a suspected case of typhoid fever.²⁰⁸ The next most frequent surgery was for appendicitis. Twenty-one children underwent surgery to remove their appendix, quite a high number.²⁰⁹ The medical cause is largely unknown but perhaps it could attributed it to the change in food.

Sixteen children received medical care due to injuries and accidents, many the result of play.²¹⁰ (Figure 22) Two children sustained cuts to their eyes, one from a golf club and another from a "slight accident while playing hockey, necessitating a few stitches". One child cut the tendons in their hand and another injured their hand from a rifle shot.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ John Bowlby, and James Robertson, "A two-year-old goes to hospital", *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 46, (1952): 425–427.

²⁰⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Peter Horlock".

²⁰⁷ IWM Documents, 15368, "Private Papers of Miss J Ingham".

²⁰⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Audrey Scholes nee Buxton".

²⁰⁹ Infant mortality had been steadily declining since the 1920s. The 1941 *Canada Year Book* states that "in Canada as a whole over 9,000 infant lives were preserved in 1939 which, under conditions prevailing in 1926, would have probably been lost". Measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough, diphtheria, influenza, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and diarrhea posed serious risks for children. In 1939, 382 children in Canada died from whooping-cough and 1,753 from pneumonia. *Canada Year Book*, 1941, 97-98.

²¹⁰ No injuries were recorded as the result of abuse or maltreatment.

²¹¹ Author's Evacuee Database.

When Joan Ambridge tripped over a mat in her high school classroom, a pen was launched into her leg. She attempted to ignore the injury but it soon became infected and she had to have a surgery to lance an abscess in her leg.²¹² Scalding injuries from hot water affected two evacuees. The majority of injuries included broken legs, wrists, ankles, ribs, and arms. Eileen Simmonds was evidently accident-prone as she broke her left leg “in play” and three years later, her wrist whilst at a skating party. Some accidents were very serious. In October 1940, Patricia Silver jumped off a swing and broke her femur and knocked out her two front teeth. Once news reached CORB, representative Elspeth Davies immediately wrote to Patricia’s parents to explain the accident but was also to reassure them that Patricia would be well cared for so they had little need to worry. Before that, though, Patricia’s foster mother had written to Patricia’s parents to show that she was “getting the very best attention” and reported that Patricia apparently told her foster mother “I think this silly old leg of mine will soon get better so that I can go home with you for I have got to learn my lessons so that I can stay at the head of the class”. From this, Patricia’s foster mother extrapolated that “she is a little brick, a living example of what the British race are made up of and how they can take it, and many have remarked on that”. Even such a serious accident could be an opportunity to reinforce the great British stoicism. Within days, Patricia was apparently “happy as a kitten...and the nurses marvel[ed] at her appetite and envy the roses in her cheeks” as her foster mother noted “she is as plump as ever”.²¹³

Without case files, it is impossible to provide similar health statistics for private evacuees. The University of Toronto Committee, however, recorded the health of their evacuees, providing a unique insight and comparison between CORB and private children. Firstly, CORB evacuees were given full medical care while in Canada whilst private evacuees were not necessarily guaranteed the same widespread coverage by the federal government. The University of Toronto committee ensured, however, that all children under their care were covered by an insurance policy paid for by the Maple Leaf Fund that would cover any sickness or accident. The committee’s reports throughout the

²¹² Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Joan Ambridge”.

²¹³ IWM Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”.

war show that this insurance was used, despite the fact that many doctors donated their services. Between November 1940 and November 1941 the insurance was used to care for two cases of influenza, one case of pneumonia, six for measles, one for bronchitis, one chicken pox, eleven tonsillectomies, one wrist fracture, one broken arm, one cut forehead/stitches, one fractured heel, one hospitalisation for high temperature, one hospital stay for tonsillitis, one hospital stay for pinworms, and one for mumps. Although the insurance covered dental care, many foster parents had their evacuees treated by their own dentists at no cost. In later years, the medical insurance continued to cover such illnesses in addition to two cases of whooping cough, twelve tonsillectomies, three appendectomies, three cases of scarlet fever, one fractured skull, one broken wrist, two streptococcal throats, two cases of mumps, one severe cut on head, and one case of gallstones. Ear and nose infections were also common.²¹⁴ This suggests that both CORB and private evacuees were susceptible to similar illnesses and injuries and received the necessary medical care. Whether treating private or CORB evacuees, Canadian doctors, however, did not have legal authority to operate on evacuees without their parents' consent. The Guardianship Act was passed in 1942 for "the Temporary Migration of Children", making the British High Commissioner the legal guardian of all CORB evacuees until the day that they departed from Canada.²¹⁵ After 1942, the British High Commissioner acted in this capacity, allowing foster parents to receive permission for medical treatment more quickly. As contacting parents required time, in at least one case a doctor went ahead with a life-saving surgery without parental permission.

Foster parents worked to keep evacuees in the best physical health and cared for them throughout their illnesses, but they also had to help their young charges through emotional struggles. In addition to having to acclimatise to Canadian life and cope with

²¹⁴ TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Offer from University of Toronto".

²¹⁵ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Speeches and General Surveys". Parents were able to write to CORB to express their wishes that in the event of their death/s, their child's foster parents could become their legal guardians, a liberty which many took as evidenced by such notes on children's case files.

familial separation, some evacuees suffered traumas. Thirty-three evacuees were recorded as being informed that their fathers had been killed or reported missing in action. Dorothy and Pamela Pye lost their father to tuberculosis not long after they had arrived in Canada.²¹⁶ Robert Shields' mother died and John Thorn tragically lost both his parents in an air raid. Other evacuees like John and Jean Archer lost siblings in the war, whilst others lost young siblings due to natural causes. Foster parents would have borne the responsibility of breaking this news to their evacuees and needed to attune to any difficulties the children exhibited, dealing with them as they saw fit. Whether due to loss of a loved one or simply through homesickness or difficulties adjusting to familial separation, some evacuees showed signs of distress. Catherine Anderson spent the first six months in Canada routinely falling out of bed.²¹⁷ Others had been deeply affected by what they had witnessed in Britain. David Simister arrived as a very nervous boy after being shot at by a German fighter plane while crossing a clearing. This caused him to awake routinely in the night screaming with nightmares during his first few months in Canada.²¹⁸ Another manifestation of emotional troubles, some children suffered from enuresis upon arrival.²¹⁹ Although it often resolved itself over time, six other evacuees required medical attention due to the condition. There may have been many more children who experienced even mild cases of enuresis but their foster mothers could deal with it. CORB evacuees were also provided care for extreme psychological issues. Out of all the CORB evacuees, only one was recorded as having a "mental breakdown". Fifteen-year-old Mary Ford was admitted to hospital in November, 1941 in a "highly nervous state and in need of constant care". Her case file contains no further details to explain what this care entailed. Her files recorded that she made "considerable progress" in January 1942 but suffered a "relapse" in October 1942. For treatment Mary was moved

²¹⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Dorothy Pye".

²¹⁷ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson".

²¹⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Roger Harris". Enuresis is a common problem, in UK foster parents found it to be a big problem

²¹⁹ According to leading child psychoanalyst in the 1940s Donald Winnicott, enuresis, and incontinence were never only the result of physiological issues but were often a sign of "conflict". Lesley Caldwell and Angela Joyce. *Reading Winnicott* (London: Routledge, 2011), 33.

from Windsor, Nova Scotia, and was admitted to the Halifax “Infirmation”.²²⁰ Although the particulars of Mary’s treatment are vague, that she was provided with care illustrates that Canada held true to its pledge to provide care for evacuees.

In three instances, not even full medical care could save evacuees. By 1944, three CORB evacuees had died while in Canada. John Archer and his sister Jean arrived from Tottenham, London and were placed in a nominated home with their aunt Mrs. and Mr. Wallace Rawl in Annapolis, Nova Scotia. All seemed well for their placement until July 21, 1941 when John was taken to hospital. Despite receiving medical care, he died four days later on July 25, 1941 from spinal meningitis at the age of seven. John’s sister Jean remained with their aunt for the remainder of the war.²²¹ Jean had to return to Britain in June, 1945 without her brother, almost four years after his death. Hugh McIntyre left his home in Glasgow at aged fifteen and went to live with his uncle in Calgary, Alberta.²²² By 1941, Hugh had left school and was working for his uncle.²²³ Just a year later, in April 1942, Hugh developed tuberculosis and was sent to a sanatorium. On June 15, 1944 at the age of nineteen, Hugh passed away.²²⁴ Although both John and Hugh died from their illnesses, their deaths were not due to a lack of access to medical treatment. The third evacuee to die whilst in Canada did not die from poor health or illness but rather accident. Bernard Long and his brother Dennis had arrived from Norwich and went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Tennants, an un-nominated home in Binscarth, Manitoba.²²⁵ The boys seemed fine in Canada until November 21, 1944 when Bernard was tragically shot

²²⁰ Case file reads Infirmation but presume it must be infirmary.

²²¹ Author’s Evacuee Database, John Archer. In 1939, nineteen children in Canada died from spinal meningitis. *Canada Year Book*, 1941, 98.

²²² Author’s Evacuee Database, Hugh McIntyre.

²²³ Ibid. In 1939, 108 children in Canada died from Tuberculosis. *Canada Year Book*, 1941, 98. Mona Gleason points out that between 1941-1945, an annual average of 50.1 infants died from tuberculosis in Canada. An average of 9.7 children died annually from communicable diseases (including diphtheria, whooping cough, measles, scarlet fever, and typhoid fever) and 60.6 died from accidents. That only three evacuees of the 1,532 who came through CORB died, suggests that evacuees had a smaller chance of death compared to their Canadian peers. Mona Gleason, *Small Matters*, 149.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Author’s Evacuee Database, Bernard Long.

and killed by his brother.²²⁶ Dennis had started working on a farm a year earlier so it is possible that the accident occurred on the farm.²²⁷ The circumstances of Bernard's death remain unclear as his case file only records the date of his death; that he was shot by his brother only emerges in another CORB record. That case files usually report important information suggests that details of Bernard's death may have been purposefully omitted from his file, erasing his brother's horrific action from the family record. At the end of the war, Dennis did not return to Britain and instead stayed in Canada as a settler. For the Archer and McIntyre families, the lasting impact of evacuation was felt as a part of their family would forever remain in Canada. For these families, evacuation, which was supposed to protect their children, inadvertently brought their death.

Over the course of the war, the extent to which children settled into their new homes remained a major concern for Canadian authorities and foster families. When CORB was established it was decided that evacuees should be routinely visited to monitor their wellbeing. Child welfare specialists such as workers from the Children's Aid Society were supposed to visit evacuees and record their physical health, schooling, and overall emotional health. Reports from each province were compiled and forwarded to CORB's head office in Britain. As childcare fell under provincial jurisdiction, the practice of home visits for evacuees could have varied by province. The provinces' ability to conduct visits also depended on the availability of individuals to conduct them. At the outbreak of war, New Brunswick had no functioning Children's Aid Society; the influx of evacuees in fact led to its establishment.²²⁸ Alberta's childcare network was problematic; neither Calgary nor Edmonton had Children's Aid Societies. The province had been under Charlotte Whitton's criticism since before the war because the Superintendent of Neglected Children, T.R. Blain, claimed that he had no place "for

²²⁶ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Speeches and General Surveys". Canada lost three evacuees whilst none apparently died in New Zealand or South Africa and only perished whilst in Australia.

²²⁷ Author's Evacuee Database, Dennis Long".

²²⁸ Bilson, *The Guest Children*, 255.

scientific child welfare”. Saskatchewan was only a moderate improvement as they were CAS in the four largest towns. In Nova Scotia, Mackinnon tried to improve childcare services but the CAS was poorly funded and understaffed.²²⁹ Quebec had no CAS and existing childcare groups were usually affiliated with religious organisations. Ontario, British Columbia, and Manitoba, by contrast, had the best childcare in the country.²³⁰ Manitoba even had some social workers to supervise children. This suggests that evacuees’ experiences of “home visits” would vary by province but furthermore, it shows that the allocation of evacuees to the provinces was not haphazard. Instead, the placement of unnominated children across the provinces shows that Canadian authorities distributed evacuees with childcare in mind. The distribution of evacuees (figure 3) in fact reflects a hierarchy of provinces according to their childcare. As provincial distribution was based on provinces’ population and their childcare networks, Ontario and British Columbia were given the most evacuees.²³¹

Additionally impacting the quality and frequency of home visits was evacuees’ placements in rural communities. In some rural communities, there was no local Children’s Aid Society. Childcare authorities tried to keep unnominated children in cities and towns. For nominated children, who sometimes were further afield, the task usually fell on the shoulders of a Reverend or Minister.²³² For any “home visitors”, trekking out to remote places across the province twice a year would have been a significant and time-consuming undertaking which would have been in addition to local authorities’ existing tasks. June Ambridge who lived with her aunt recalled a social worker visiting twice a year. When such visits were conducted (as per CORB’s regulations) it was most often the case that foster parents were in the room. This would have severely limited the child’s

²²⁹ Alberta established a Children’s Aid Society. Saskatoon’s CAS was apparently so poorly run that Whitton suggested another group be established to bypass the CAS. Regina only had two women, Ruby Gleiser and Anne Phin (who had no professional skills and worked alone to supervise) children. Bilson, *The Guest Children*, 92.

²³⁰ Diane, Purvey and Christopher Walmsley. *Child and Family Welfare in British Columbia* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2005).

²³¹ That New Brunswick and PEI received small numbers is not simply because of a lack of childcare but also because the population was quite small.

²³² TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Canada, Reception Overseas: Nova Scotia”.

ability to express any concerns openly. If such visits had been conducted at school, there would have been a greater opportunity. Thus, it is impossible to know how many children were unhappy in their foster homes but found no way of telling a local childcare representative.²³³

Reports from home visits were subsequently forwarded to CORB. What is very clear, though, is that CORB officials would thoroughly read these reports and in some instances would reprimand individuals who provided insufficient supervision reports. CORB records reveal that reports did not always meet CORB's expectations. On November 7, 1941 CORB representative Phyllis Shaw sent a report to Britain. Upon receiving it, Miss Maxse wrote on the bottom, "I am afraid that this group of reports gives you very little real information about the children. They are the most meagre ones we have received".²³⁴ The consequences of such a useless report are unknown. These reports were however very important for meeting CORB's policy of keeping parents up to date and in touch with their child. CORB's *modus operandi* was that parents had always to be consulted, when possible, on important decisions. Not only were parents supposed to be contacted any time a CORB child was hospitalised, moved province, or was placed in a different foster home, the British High Commission also had to be notified. The responsibility for these children lay with the highest British authority in the country.²³⁵

In February 1941, Jopson himself visited the Maritime Provinces and made special house calls to thirteen evacuees in Halifax, eleven in Moncton, two in St. John, thirteen in Charlottetown, and two at Rothesay, a boarding school in Yarmouth, NS.²³⁶ He reported that not only did all the children seem happy and well-placed but that the CORB programme was in fact fuelling some improvements to provincial child

²³³ They still possibly could have told a teacher or another adult.

²³⁴ Regina was apparently bad at keeping satisfactory records for CORB. TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Canada, Reception Overseas: Nova Scotia".

²³⁵ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Speeches and General Surveys".

²³⁶ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Canada, Reception Overseas: Nova Scotia".

welfare.²³⁷ A few months later, in September 1941, Geoffrey Shakespeare made a visit to Canada to check personally on the progress of his CORB evacuees. His tour stretched from sea to sea as he visited: Ottawa, Toronto, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Regina, Moosejaw, Edmonton, Westaskiwin, Victoria, Montreal, Moncton, Sackville, St. John, Charlottetown, Halifax, Windsor, Kentville, Wolfville, and Middleton. At each stop along the way, he would host receptions for all local children and their foster families, often held at parliament buildings or large hotels to reinforce to the legitimacy of the evacuation scheme. Shakespeare's report concluded that the experience of evacuation had made evacuees into "the finest missionaries of Empire".²³⁸ Evacuation continued to be framed as not only for the good of the children but also for the good of the Empire.

It is much more difficult to trace the measures that private organisations took to monitor their evacuees' well-being. Records from University of Toronto committee show a similar zest for monitoring their evacuees as CORB. Even in 1941, the report reiterated its responsibilities to the children's parents and government authorities in Canada for keeping in touch with the children and being well-informed on their progress. Although conscious of interfering with the care that foster parents were providing, it was simultaneously the committee's duty to provide assistance when needed to ensure happy relationships. To do so, the committee sent delegates, including Dr. Karl Bernhard, a child psychologist at the Institute for Child Study in Toronto, to conduct home visits; the committee also requested progress reports from foster parents every October.²³⁹ The committee therefore kept a watchful eye on the children who had been placed under their care. As evidence of this, between 1941 and 1942, the committee used 4300 sheets of

²³⁷ TNA, DO 131/47, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Canada, Reception Overseas: Nova Scotia".

²³⁸ TNA, DO 131/32, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Report by Sir G Shakespeare on his visit to Canada".

²³⁹ TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Offer from University of Toronto".

letterhead paper, 3,500 sheets of bond paper, and over 7,500 envelopes for correspondence.²⁴⁰

To what extent did home visits and routine communication between foster parents and Canadian authorities and CORB successfully act as a mechanism to protect the interests of evacuees and foster parents? The extensive efforts of CORB and private individuals to find appropriate foster parents, place the children in suitable homes, and monitor the children's wellbeing could not prevent issues from arising in some households. Yet the way evacuation in Canada was organised and facilitated meant that evacuees could be moved to another foster home if the need arose. Evacuees' home lives and any moves between foster parents greatly determined evacuees' experiences. Although the existing historiography recognises that some evacuees were removed from their initial foster homes, there has never been any sense of how many children had to be removed from their original host home nor the reasons for those moves. The database reveals that of the 1,528 CORB children who were originally placed by CORB authorities (three were added to CORB in 1942), 863 or 56 percent children remained for the duration of the war with their first foster family. (Figure 23) For those who assumed that evacuees were constantly being bumped through foster homes, the database shows that over half of CORB evacuees remained unmoved, and were able to receive some much needed stability after the separation from their families. Of those 863 children, 407 (47 percent) had been placed in nominated homes. This suggest that evacuees' parents had chosen compatible nominated homes that importantly were willing to keep their promise of care.

The number also illustrates that Canadian authorities, with their rigorous foster parent application and placement process, succeeded in finding suitable homes for the other half of the approximately 800 children.²⁴¹ A total of 355 (23 percent) evacuees were placed into a total of two foster homes, meaning they experienced only one change of foster home. Of this group, 119 (33 percent) had originally been placed in nominated

²⁴⁰ TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Offer from University of Toronto".

²⁴¹ Author's Evacuee Database.

homes meaning that relations had originally been willing to care for the child but then changed their minds or the family circumstances changed. Almost 10 percent, or 152 children, went to three foster homes, with fifty-seven of those being originally placed with nominated foster parents. Eighty-eight children (5.7 percent) were each placed into four homes, thirty-four of whom went originally to nominated homes); forty-two children (2.7 percent) each went to five homes (twelve to nominated homes in the first instance). Twelve children (0.7 percent) were placed six times during the war. In more extreme cases, six children went to seven homes, and four children moved between eight, nine, ten, and eleven homes respectively. The number of children placed in more than four or more foster homes was 152, equating to only 10 percent of all CORB evacuees.²⁴² In total, 80 percent of CORB evacuees experienced long periods of unchanged domestic space. In one of his speeches, Shakespeare sympathised with evacuees' plight noting, "no easy thing to be taken 5000 miles and settle in the homes of strangers, however kind".²⁴³ Each move between foster parents would have required evacuees to become reacquainted with a new foster family, and even possibly a new town and school. While 10 percent is still a significant proportion, the database shows that most evacuees remained with their original foster parents, whether nominated or in un-nominated homes.

The frequency and number of times that private evacuees were moved to different foster families is again impossible to ascertain because the Canadian government did not record them. This is particularly true of private evacuees who arrived without the assistance of any group or organisation. Meticulous records from the University of Toronto committee, however, again act as a good case study. In 1941, the committee recorded that of the 104 children originally placed under their purview, only twenty-three (22 percent) children had been moved within their first year. Each replacement, the committee noted, required "over 25 letters, over 50 phone calls, and ten or more interviews".²⁴⁴ Although the moves were due to a variety of reasons, the committee noted

²⁴² Author's Evacuee Database.

²⁴³ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Speeches and General Surveys".

²⁴⁴ TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Offer from University of Toronto".

that in each case the foster parents, rather than the children, had requested the change. This suggested that evacuees had not reported any wrongdoing on their foster parents' part. Illness, change of circumstance within the home, and even the enlistment of the foster parent were the main reasons for moves; the report claimed that "incompatibility of foster parents and child has been the reason in very few cases". By 1942, ninety-five children remained in the committee's care, sixty-seven of whom had not moved. Ten of those ninety-five children lived some distance away in Ottawa, Oshawa, Owen Sound, Kapuskasing (two), St. Catharines (two), Vineland, and Brampton (two) while the rest lived in Toronto. Of the twenty-eight children who did experience a move, eighteen had moved once, six had moved twice, and four, three times. The majority were removed due to "circumstances" while a few others because of behavioural difficulties.²⁴⁵ By 1942, 70 percent of the evacuees who had been placed by the committee had remained in their original homes, a slightly lower number than CORB's overall rate.

When CORB evacuees were moved, Canadian authorities had to work to find alternative foster homes, often within a short time. Local authorities may have drawn on individuals who had originally offered to take in evacuees but had not had the opportunity to, considering the fact that Canada received only one-seventh of the number expected. Although CORB records do not illuminate the process of re-homing children, it is possible that childcare authorities and Children's Aid Society workers were forthright and approached potential foster families directly. Where possible, it would have been favourable to keep evacuees in the same town and area. Evidence suggest that in some cases individuals like principals and school teachers became secondary foster parents. Although there is no evidence to suggest that Canadian authorities or CORB relaxed their standards for foster homes, in cases where a foster home was needed immediately evacuees may have ended up with alternative families, such as those in working-class areas. A small number of evacuees, such as John Macnab, were temporarily placed in

²⁴⁵ TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Offer from University of Toronto". The record however states that even though some children moved, and had behavioural issues, their moves were not necessarily all driven because of those issues.

children's homes until a suitable home could be found. This was a better option than placing evacuees simply in whichever home wanted children.

The reason for children's moves were also logged in evacuees' case files. The database reveals that evacuees were not always moved due to bad behaviour as one may expect. (Figure 24) The rigorous process that Canadians went through to become foster parents worked to ensure that they were not simply taking a child in the wave a patriotic fervor. There may have been some foster parents, however, who underestimated the time, effort, and money required to care for an evacuee. Out of the 656 children who were moved from their first placement, eighty-one cases were due to "family circumstances" which included reasons such as the host family was moving or that providing care for three children had become too strenuous.²⁴⁶ Some foster families like that of Marion and Marjory Griggs had to leave their foster home when their hosts fell on hard times due to crop failure and simply could no longer afford the extra responsibility.²⁴⁷ The evacuees' biological parents could also request that their children be moved. That only two parents felt the need to pursue this option suggests that British parents were mostly satisfied with the judgement of Canadian authorities. Bryan and Derek Jones' parents asked for them to be moved because there was "too great a contrast between their own home and that of foster parents". This was despite the fact that they had gone to live with their aunt.

Changing circumstances also led some nominated parents to surrender their evacuees. John and Emily Macnab went to their aunt's in Winnipeg but the uncle was soon taken ill so they had to move on.²⁴⁸ At foster parents' request or as a result of a home visit, some evacuees had to move because they could not settle in the home. Such placements were simply not successful as terms such as "incompatibility" and "failure to adjust" were employed as reasons on case files. Such language avoided placing blame on either the child or foster family. Using similar rhetoric, in a speech, Shakespeare claimed "small percentage of children who have failed to adjust themselves, and this failure was

²⁴⁶ Author's Evacuee Database, "Joan Longman".

²⁴⁷ Author's Evacuee Database, Marjory and Marion Griggs had to leave their first hosts, the Suttons in Marshall SK, due to crop failure.

²⁴⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Macnab".

not always due to the children themselves but to inevitable misfits and strange environment”²⁴⁹ With distinctly different language, sixteen evacuees had to be moved because of behavioural or discipline problems. Sometimes case files listed the child as “unmanageable”, “possessing bad behaviour”, or noted that there were complaints. One boy in Nova Scotia was moved because he had “bad sex habits” at the age of eleven and it was thought that he should be split up from his brother. Another evacuee began taking small items such as fruit and money from his foster house.²⁵⁰ Rather than classify these evacuees as delinquent, the Canadian authorities recognised that some behaviour could be attributed to the strain of separation and emotional stress. After all, CORB’s strict application process was supposed to eliminate children with negative characteristics. Although it is unknown the extent to which Canadian childcare and Children’s Aid Society workers were emerged in such ground-breaking literature. Bowlby’s theory of delinquency later drew a link between a child’s poor behaviour such as thieving and separation from their mother during childhood.²⁵¹ In most cases, a change in foster home resolved many of these issues. Out of 1,532 CORB evacuees, only sixty-four were placed in more than five homes and could be considered as long-term troubled cases that could not be solved by changing foster homes.

Such reasons for changing their homes show that the facilitation of evacuation in Canada inadvertently protected foster parents’ interests. If foster parents wanted or needed to, they could be absolved of their foster parent responsibility. This worked to protect evacuees from individuals no longer wanting to provide suitable care. In Britain, domestic evacuation used compulsory billeting to provide foster homes. It often left evacuees in the homes of individuals who did not want to have to care for children. It is

²⁴⁹ By misfits, Shakespeare may not have been referring to evacuees or foster homes that did not “fit” or were misaligned rather than by calling the children “misfits” as a derogatory term. TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Speeches and General Surveys”.

²⁵⁰ Author’s Evacuee Database. Some case files direct reader towards numbered documents but these have since been destroyed or lost.

²⁵¹ John Bowlby, “Forty-Four Juvenile Thieves: Their Character and Home-Life”, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 25 (1944): 19-52. In addition to enuresis and incontinence, Donald Winnicott also argued that “stealing, truancy from school and billets, obvious cases of anxiety, depressive, ‘sulky moods’ and ‘odd and insane behaviour’ were all symptoms of trouble. See Caldwell and Joyce, *Reading Winnicott*, 2011. Winnicott made the argument in a radio broadcast of which the transcript appears in Donald Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1984).

from this that horrific stories emerge such as Sir Michael Caine's memory of being locked in a cupboard all weekend while his foster parents went away. The most prevalent reason for evacuees' moves was health of host/ess. With illnesses being much more incapacitating without modern medicine like antibiotics, this was a legitimate reason. Health could have also referred to older host families who wanted to contribute to the cause but found they were unable to keep up with young children.²⁵² Almost 200 children changed foster homes but their case files record no reason. This could have been because local Children's Aid Society workers failed to provide a sufficient record. Miss Maxse's criticism of a lack of sufficient records lends credence to this. Sorting the database by province shows that there did not seem to be any consistency in cities, regions, or provinces that were particularly neglecting in recording such important notes.²⁵³ One reason for this could be that workers felt that not providing a reason could be a way to be entirely opaque. In none of the case files were any incidents of abuse or maltreatment. A pessimist may say that in some of these cases the true reasons for the child's removal (either because of the child's or the foster family's actions) were too inappropriate or unpleasant to record. Those responsible for finding replacement foster homes and recording reasons would have been the same individuals who made the original placement and selected the foster parents. Not providing a reason could ensure the childcare workers avoided criticism themselves and could also protect foster parents, particularly if they were pillars of the community. Even with rich records and the compiled database, there will always be some mystery.

This does not attempt to brush over any evacuees' negative experiences nor glorify their experiences, yet it is important not to draw inferences when there is no evidence of abuse. This also does not neglect the fact that some evacuees may have faced inappropriate and abusive situations. Catherine Anderson found that traveling as part of the Ford group with little supervision ultimately turned harmful. While she was playing on deck, she recalls that a man on the lower deck appeared to be lending his binoculars to

²⁵² Author's Evacuee Collection, "Fabian Pease".

²⁵³ Author's Evacuee Database. Some were living in Calgary and Edmonton which, as discussed earlier, were problematic yet there were also blank files for those in Ontario, Manitoba, etc.

children to see the convoy when a group of “big children” grabbed her and took her down despite her trying to pull away. A man who she had previously seen with his hand up a little boy’s shorts lifted her up onto a bollard. “Immediately [his hand] was inside my clothing and his fingers hurt” she recalled “I squirmed and pushed away and was let down to run off”. For the remaining journey she avoided that part of the ship when she spotted the same group. She told no one as “there was no one to tell”.²⁵⁴ As private evacuees in a group, Canadian authorities had no measures to prevent such incidents. Rather sadly, it shows the dangers that lurked on a ship with all sorts of passengers. Mary Hume, a CORB evacuee who stayed in Stratford with her aunt and uncle, suffered not insignificant hardship. Her mother, fulfilling CORB’s packing list, had supplied Mary with sanitary towels. Upon arrival at their home, Mary’s aunt/foster mother confiscated the items to prevent Mary from using them and kept them for herself. Instead, Mary was given cloth towels that, much to her embarrassment, had to be hand washed and hung on the line to dry. The home’s corner lot meant passers-by could see these personal items. Even worse, Mary noted that her uncle “behaved inappropriately” towards her but she did not know any better.²⁵⁵ Eventually Mary left her aunt’s home and went to live with a school friend in Stratford. Although the dispute was over a job interview, rather than the other issues, that final incident led Mary to speak up. In Nova Scotia, one girl fell pregnant although there was no suggestion of abuse.²⁵⁶ The extent to which evacuees were able to vocalise homes in which they were unhappy is unknown. For children, recording such incidents in letters to their parents may have been the most effective method. Biological parents could have requested a change of home or an inquest but ultimately this entirely depended upon children being conscious of what constituted inappropriate behaviour. Even as the war dragged on, Canadian authorities still worked to ensure evacuees were safe, happy, and cared for. That evacuees were not pushed into

²⁵⁴ Catherine claimed “Nothing of this incident stayed with me. It did me no harm. I might never have recalled it, except, as an adult, I was in a position where I had to review formal accounts of abuse. Suddenly, as I read, the situation flashed into my mind in the form of a complete photograph and I identified it for what it was”. Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

²⁵⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Mary Richardson nee Hume”.

²⁵⁶ 2002-009, “Fred McKinnon Fonds”

children's homes or orphanages for long-term stays shows the pledge that evacuees would be well cared for.

If foster parents wanted to or needed to relinquish their role as foster parent, Canadian authorities provided a mechanism to ensure they were not “stuck” with the evacuees. The extent to which evacuees were able to speak out homes in which they were unhappy is unknown. For children, writing letters to their parents may have been the most effective method. Despite these incidents of replacements, it is important to remember that the majority of evacuees were placed in seemingly happy homes. Very few were jostled from home to home and only a very few were placed in institutions and only then for a short amount of time and due to a lack of an immediately available foster home.²⁵⁷ This stood up for Canada's pledge that evacuees would be cared for in private homes.

As with any child, the evacuees' home life fundamentally shaped their childhood. The four or five years that evacuees spent in Canada became a significant portion of their childhoods. Foster parents played a significant role in evacuees' home lives yet their efforts have been overshadowed in existing literature. Evacuees in Canada had a myriad of experiences within a private space. Evacuees' letters reflect how they perceived evacuation and how they strove to stay in contact with their families. Foster parents and parents formed relationships, despite many being total strangers, and often worked, in many instances, to co-parent the children. Foster parents took their roles seriously and strove to do their best to ensure evacuees were happy and healthy. This largely uncompensated service provided by foster parents, who were not just care givers but who also came to love their evacuees deeply, must be added into the narrative of evacuation. Foster parents also encouraged evacuees to maintain contact with their family in Britain and tried to keep the evacuees connected to “home”. The children's private lives in Canada therefore acted as a space in which they could acclimatise to their evacuation. The special care provided for evacuees by foster parents and Canadian authorities was a

²⁵⁷ The exceptions are evacuees who were placed in boarding schools or in one case, a boys' home because of behavioural problems.

manifestation of their importance as Britain's children. That foster parents volunteered to take evacuees, and that children could be rehomed if either they or their foster families were unhappy, in addition to the level of care provided to the children, seem to have reduced the levels of neglect and abuse that were prevalent in the domestic evacuation in Britain. All of this reinforced evacuees' special status of being British children worthy of protection. The experiences of evacuees in Canadian homes are vastly different from those of domestic evacuees. Although CORB and private evacuees were organised in different ways, all evacuees had successes and some struggles. The structure of evacuation in Canada worked to protect foster parents' interests but also largely protected evacuees. Conceptualising the children's experiences within the private sphere in this way highlights the shared experiences between CORB and private evacuees. CORB evacuees have been cast as having more traumatic experiences while private evacuees were more privileged. It is not that private evacuees were given the privileged life while CORB evacuees were relegated to poorer homes. Even if some private evacuees went to wealthy homes, many CORB evacuees went to live with Canadians who were pillars in their communities and therefore held a high social standing.

Chapter Four

Cultivating Kinship in Canada's Public Spaces: The Public Lives of Evacuees

On December 24, 1940 *The Montreal Gazette*, under the headline “Santa Remembers British Children”, reported, “Canada’s little war guests, though far from their own homes, will not be forgotten this Christmas. For the Canadian Santa Claus has been keeping them firmly in mind, aided and abetted by various organizations and private individuals”.¹ Public spaces and holidays like Christmas became ways that Canadians could contribute to and interact with evacuees. The enthusiasm and anticipation with which Canadians sought to help British children did not wane upon their arrival. Canadian authorities and foster parents worked to provide suitable foster homes for evacuees, as the purpose of evacuation was to protect children from the war and enable them to carry on their private lives in peace. Evacuees were cast into the public spotlight once in Canada. The attention and care directed towards their private lives paradoxically meant that their identity as evacuees secured their place within the public space, as they became “Canada’s war guests”. This war guest status meant that evacuees were given preferential treatment throughout the war and across various public spaces. These spaces, both physical and imagined, became places where evacuees interacted with the Canadian public.² The evacuees’ experiences at school and church, with friendships, during holidays and festivals, in organised and unorganised activities, and performing summer work, together with the Canadian landscape, shaped their overall experience of evacuation. Evacuees in Canada were thereby transformed from “ordinary” British children into Canada’s war guests for the duration of the war. They were not simply saved from the dangers of aerial bombardment; Canadians attempted to give them a hyper-positive war experience. Evacuees were feted, praised, and protected.

¹ “Santa Remembers British Children”, *Montreal Gazette*, December 24, 1940.

² This conceptualisation is similar to that of Simon Sleight who, to spatialise the history of childhood, utilises the concept of “public space” to view youth in Melbourne. See Simon Sleight, *Young People and the Shaping of Public Space in Melbourne, 1870–1914* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).

The Canadian eagerness to host British children meant that when the evacuees finally arrived they were met with the same, if not greater, enthusiasm. While previous chapters have explored the ways evacuees themselves perceived their journey and experiences in their new homes, it is also important to consider how others perceived their arrival and presence in Canada. Unlike the evacuees' departure from Britain which was shrouded in secrecy, constant news coverage in Canada of evacuees' arrivals ensured that they were thrust into public view. Although the children may have been directed to sing songs such as "There'll Always be an England", no crowds were permitted at the departure ports to wave them farewell. A much different scene awaited them when they docked in Canada. Although information about when and where evacuees' ships would arrive was often uncertain, Canadians still managed to greet the children with warm welcomes. On July 8, 1940, the *Halifax Chronicle* announced on its front page that a group of girls from Roedean, a private school in Brighton, was "Safe in Nova Scotia" and on its way to Edgehill Girl's School in Windsor, Nova Scotia.³ Although the names of the ships were never publicly listed, the *Halifax Chronicle* reported "82 Children Reach Canada" as the "first group of British government evacuees".⁴ Locals and those waiting at ports in Halifax, Montreal, and Quebec did what they could to greet the young passengers. In collaboration with the Red Cross, the Junior League of Halifax went to the port to greet evacuees.⁵ On August 16, 1940 when the *Hilary* arrived in Halifax carrying CORB children including Grace Blackman, crowds filled the docks. A band played loudly and individuals even passed "foreign" Canadian money to the children.⁶ The *Halifax Chronicle* continued to record arrivals, on August 17 printing a photo of two evacuees waving from the ship, still wearing their school uniforms topped off with a

³ "Safe in Nova Scotia" *Halifax Chronicle*, July 8 1940. The Toronto Telegram reported that almost three hundred British children had arrived at a necessarily undisclosed "Eastern Canadian Port". "300 Britons Mostly Young Coming to City", *Toronto Telegram*, July 20 1940.

⁴ "82 Children Reach Canada", *Halifax Chronicle*, August 3, 1940. Shipping records review that this was the *Anselm*.

⁵ Halifax Municipal Archive, Junior League of Halifax, CR 27.05.09- CR 27.07.10

⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Grace Wilson nee Blackman". For many this would have been their first sight of Canadian money.

school cap.⁷ When the *Duchess of York* docked at Halifax three days later, a newsreel camera crew boarded the ship to catch a glimpse of the children on the momentous occasion.⁸ On August 30, the day that saw the largest group of evacuees arrive, the newspaper recorded that a “Huge ‘Children’s Flotilla’ Arrive[d] safely in East Canadian Harbour” carrying 2000 English children.⁹ Keith Jopson, Canadian representative for CORB, personally greeted the children at the port. Such news was picked up across the country. The *Toronto Telegram* also reported the first arrival of CORB children and claimed “Britons see Canada as Last and Deciding Factor in Winning War”.¹⁰ The *Montreal Gazette* reported that 800 children had arrived safely after a “cheerful voyage, sight of iceberg, a whale thrill[ed] youngsters”.¹¹ In contrast to their departure from Britain, Canadians celebrated the evacuees’ arrivals in Canada, keeping it a national news story throughout the summer of 1940. Even before evacuees set foot on Canadian soil, a special status was imbued upon them.

News coverage of the children’s arrivals spread as they made their way across the country by train. Such reports informed Canadians and enabled them to greet evacuees at train stations. As her train stopped in Quebec on August 20, Margaret Beal “talked to two nice Frenchmen” and then a lady passed out a box of chocolates to the children. A little boy soon followed suit with lollipops. This scene unfolded countless times as Margaret’s train stopped at stations on route to Winnipeg, Manitoba; local citizens waited at the stations, as if it had been pre-arranged, with candy and questions of what life was like in Britain.¹² Similarly, David and Gordon Hope found people waiting at all the small stations along the way to Sarnia, Ontario, offering chocolate, toffee, and chewing gum to

⁷ “Children Arrive at Eastern Coast Port”, *Halifax Chronicle*, August 17, 1940.

⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolensky nee Beal”. Page 249 discusses for what purpose this footage was later used.

⁹ Not all were CORB evacuees. This number also included private evacuees and children traveling with their mothers. “Huge ‘Children’s Flotilla’ Arrive[d] safely in East Canadian Harbour”, *Halifax Chronicle*, August 30, 1940.

¹⁰ “First British Children Under Government Care Reach Canadian Shores”, *Toronto Telegram*, July 31, 1940.

¹¹ “800 Children Arrive Safely from England”, *Montreal Gazette*, August 24, 1940.

¹² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolensky nee Beal”.

evacuees.¹³ En route to Toronto, passengers on Margaret Burt's train gave the children chocolate as small gestures of welcome.¹⁴ The sentiment was continued as far as Vancouver with locals giving out candy bars as Neil Benton's train crossed the Prairies. Often, Canadian press members also waited at the train stations in the provincial distribution cities with their cameras ready.

By September 1940, just about every Canadian would have undoubtedly heard the news of the evacuees' arrivals. As they arrived at their foster homes, some thousands of kilometres from Eastern ports, local journalists continued to perceive evacuees as newsworthy. In turn, the more public attention evacuees received, the more they were raised to celebrity status. The *Cranbrook Courier*, for instance, reported Les Oliver's arrival as the "first evacuee here".¹⁵ Many newspapers chose to profile the children's impressions of their new circumstances. Private evacuee Veronica Owens arrived in Toronto and had to spend most of the morning with newspaper reporters who wanted to know her impressions of Canada. Veronica recorded "I'm afraid we weren't very help[ful] as we haven't had time to think about that".¹⁶ On August 23, 1940, the *Calgary Herald* reported that six CORB children were finally "At Home" in Calgary". One of the children, a ten-year-old boy named Fred, apparently exclaimed that they would not "have the slightest bit of trouble getting used to Canada". According to the article, "it was Fred who led the group off the train, politely shook hands with relatives and friends of all the group, flashed a gay, disarming smile and took complete command of the situation by answering questions from all sides about all the children with the ease of a celebrity".¹⁷ Even at such a young age, Fred was cast as having exuberant confidence and a film star persona. As journalists imbued articles with evacuees' stoicism and Canada's hospitality, newspaper coverage carved out a new identity for the children. Use of the term "refugee" had already been banned, but the term "evacuee" or even "British child" were swiftly cast

¹³ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Neil Benton".

¹⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Burt Hamilton", "Neil Benton".

¹⁵ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Les Oliver". "Nephew of H.C. Oliver First Evacuee Here", *Cranbrook Courier*, October 6, 1940.

¹⁶ IWM, Documents, 134, "Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens". She wrote about the experience in a letter to her parents.

¹⁷ "First Aided Evacuees 'At Home' in Calgary", *Calgary Herald*, August 23, 1940.

aside. Instead, the children became known as Canada's "war guests", a suitably welcoming and respectful term. Rather than fleeing or being homeless like refugees, the children had come to Canada as guests of the Imperial family, to enjoy temporarily the safety of the land. Headlines such as "Largest Group of War Guests Reaches City" claimed that the guest children "showed no sign of worry".¹⁸ On August 2, 1940 under the heading, "confidence is keynote of arriving War Guests", the *Evening Telegram* ran some photos of the children explaining that they were the "latest war guests to cross the 'Welcome' mat on Toronto's front doorstep at Union Station".¹⁹ Canada had a new wartime responsibility to care for its young guests. In October 1940, Maclean's noted that "numerous quaint happenings [had been] reported in connection with the arrival and establishment in Canada of our youthful war guests from the beleaguered but undaunted British isles".²⁰

Even though British children were also sent to the United States, albeit only privately, "Guest Children" or "War Guest" remained a Canadian term.²¹ When almost identical news stories of evacuees' arrivals in Canada appeared in American newspapers, the term "refugee" was employed. For instance, reporting on the same arrival that the *Montreal Gazette* also covered, the *Lewiston Daily Sun* headline read "800 British Refugee Children Reach Canada".²² The *Palm Beach Post* reported later that "British Refugee Children Tell of Rescuing Seamen in Atlantic".²³ The use of the term did not change even when British children arrived in America rather than Canada. On November 13, 1940 for instance, the *Pittsburgh Press* continued to use the term in headlines such as: "Hello, Mother! Hello, Daddy! British Refugee Children Tell the Folks American is

¹⁸ "Largest Group of War Guests Reach City" *Evening Telegram*, July 31, 1940.

¹⁹ "Confidence is Keynote of Arriving British Children", *Evening Telegram*, August 2, 1940.

²⁰ Maclean's, "Parade", October 15, 1940.

²¹ "Young British Refugees are Amazed at New World", *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, October 31, 1940.

²² "800 British Refugee Child Reach Canada", *Lewiston Daily Sun*, August 24, 1940. The USA received 2,928 children between June and December, 1940. 2,271 aged five to fifteen and 657 under the age of four. Of those, 2090 were private evacuees. Very little has been written about British children who went to America.

²³ "British Refugee Children Tell of Rescuing Seamen in Atlantic", *Palm Beach Post*, October 6, 1940.

Swell”.²⁴ While evacuees in Canada were family guests, the same children in America were cast as foreign refugees. This stark contrast in terminology may be attributed to the fact that America was not part of the Imperial family.

Photographs of the children included in newspaper reports were as important as text. After months of planning, Canadians needed to *see* who they were sheltering. A picture of a group of young female war guests taken aboard their ship ran in the *Halifax Chronicle* on August 20, 1940 with the headline “They like Canada!”²⁵ That this statement was premature was wholly irrelevant. Such photos showed that evacuees looked appropriately similar to Canadian children. Their clothing, hair, and stature may have initially contrasted with their Canadian peers’, but ethnically they were the same. Like other British immigrants who arrived in Canada in the twentieth century, their physical characteristics did not distinguish them.²⁶ If evacuees changed their clothing, their accent would reveal their Britishness.²⁷ Paradoxically, as much as evacuees looked similar, their imposed war guest identity ensured that they remained distinct. In cities and towns, Canadians wanted to know *who* was joining their community as a special war guest. A photograph of Thomasina Howell’s arrival made the front page of the *Calgary Herald* on August 23, 1940.²⁸ Such pictures usually included the children’s names and sometimes listed who they were living with, making them even more identifiable. The *London Free Press* printed photographs of the city’s “Guest Children from Britain”.²⁹ On September 2, 1940, the *London Free Press*, in “14 Children From Motherland Arrive to Be Guests in This City for ‘Duration’”, described the appearances of Cedric and Kenneth Dennis from Portsmouth: “Cedric has a wide brow and fair English hair. They will be

²⁴ “Hello, Mother! Hello, Daddy! British Refugee Children Tell the Folks American is Swell”, *Pittsburgh Press*, November 13, 1940.

²⁵ “They Like Canada”, *Halifax Chronicle*, August 20, 1940.

²⁶ This is a main argument presented by Barber and Murray in *Invisible Immigrants*.

²⁷ Once outward symbols and accents changed, the imposed guest child identity kept evacuees separate. This identity though did not necessarily exclude them as imposed identities can often exclude immigrant groups from the dominant society.

²⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Thomasina Howell nee Cook”, “Audrey Scholes nee Buxton”.

²⁹ “Guest Children from Britain”, *London Free Press*, September 2, 1940.

guests with Mr. and Mrs. J.P.S. Nethercott”.³⁰ Similarly, people in Whitby, Ontario, could recognise girls from St. Hilda’s School as their photos were printed in the newspaper under the fitting headline “From Whitby, England to Whitby, Ontario”.³¹ If seen on the street, Canadians would be able to identify the special guests; evacuees changed from being anonymous to identified. Once identified, these evacuees truly could become public figures.

In Canada, the evacuees’ presence became an opportunity to reinforce the Imperial symbolism of evacuation. The Toronto *Telegram* ran a photo of three small children “taking full advantage of a fine Canadian summer” as they enjoyed “the freedom of Withrow Park” by wading in the pool. The ten-year-old boy Alan Stokes and his six-year-old sister Shirley had only twelve hours earlier arrived in Toronto from England to stay with their aunt. Yet under the caption “Dangers Behind – Pleasures Ahead” the photograph captured Shirley and her cousin Joyce Williams holding hands across the wading pool, symbolising not only their familial relationship but also Canada’s offer to lend a helping hand to Britain by caring for her children.³² These photos, such as one of a very small boy merrily walking through Union Station holding hands with a Toronto policeman, captivated Canadians. The policeman, “Canada Friend and Protector of Child Guests” became a symbol of the nation’s efforts”. In response to the photograph, a Toronto resident wrote to the *Telegram* suggesting that the photographer be praised because:

The unafraid eagerness with which this little lad steps out into the unknown future, holding fast to the hand of a friend, brings vividly to mind the quotation with which our King closed his Christmas message...Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than the known way.³³

³⁰ “14 Children From Motherland Arrive to Be Guests in This City for ‘Duration’”, *London Free Press*, September 2, 1940.

³¹ “Whitby Greets English Girl Students”, *Evening Telegram*, July 31, 1940.

³² “Dangers Behind – Pleasures Ahead”, *Toronto Telegram*, September 25, 1940.

³³ “Canada Friend and Protector of Child Guests”, *Toronto Telegram*, July 20, 1940. The phrase “Go out into the darkness...” used in the King’s Christmas message was originally penned by Miss Minnie Louise Haskins, a teacher at Havergal College. Consequently, Haskins received mail, offers of lecture tours, and broadcasts and even an invitation from the King and Queen themselves to visit Windsor Castle with them

Evacuees seemed to follow the King's advice. The children not only had a special status as "war guests" but also became symbols of the war and representatives of Britain. They were an embodiment of British resistance, their presence acting as a physical reminder of the proximity of war to Britain. As such, they were often drawn upon to act as a didactic connection to the Motherland. When the twenty-five CORB children including Muriel Pitt arrived in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, they were taken to the Lieutenant Governor's residence so he could greet and inspect the children.³⁴ Children were also often called upon to talk about their war experience. As an evacuee and because of her singing ability, Patricia Silver was asked by her foster father's friend to attend a Masonic International night to sing songs like "There'll Always be an England". Dave Anderson, her foster father's friend, recorded the success of the night to her parents:

I knew it would be a big hit and good item on the programme...before I called her up, [I] explained to the gathering she has come from Bristol and had been through the bombings and knew what it was like. You could hear a pin drop in the hall, and many of the Americans could not keep the tears back. They simply brought the hall down with cheers for England and clapping.³⁵

Such requests made evacuees cognisant of their representative status.

Canada's war guests became such a national interest that the National Film Board produced *The Children from Overseas* in late 1940 as part of the *Canada Carries On* series.³⁶ Full of symbolism, it opens with images of Westminster and then sights of London as an air raid siren wails; bombs drop as children sit in shelters reading their comics. Subtly drawing eerie parallels to evacuation, one young girl begins to tell the

to unveil a plaque which held the verses that had "provided such inspiration during the war years". "History & Tradition", Havergal College, accessed December 23, 2014.

<https://www.havergal.on.ca/discover/history-tradition/havergal-timeline/>.

³⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Jean Muriel Pitt".

³⁵ IWM, Documents, 15995, "Private Papers of Miss P M Silver".

³⁶ "The Children from Overseas", 12 min. 16mm, sound, B&W film, National Film Board of Canada, Montreal, Quebec, 1940. http://www.nfb.ca/film/children_from_overseas. The database reveals that the footage of children (include Margaret Beal) at the port was that captured by cameraman aboard the *Duchess of York* on August 19, 1940.

story of Hansel and Gretel: “they were going to get rid of the children because they had nothing to eat”. The narrator notes that just as bombs started to fall, Canada proclaimed, “send us your children, we’ll see to it they are safe and happy”. A family sits in an Anderson shelter as the father, symbolically holding a bird cage, says that he thinks they ought to let the kiddies go; other parents sit at a table and ask their sons if they want to go. “Terry” replied “yes, Mummy, I could be a cowboy in Canada”. “The great adventure then began” the narrator declares, with images of trains leaving the station as “Auld Lang Syne” plays. Children hang out of the carriage windows waving, not to their parents but to CORB officials on the platform. “Behind them, they left an England girded for war” and the “English countryside, the quiet rich fields that not even war can change”. The narrator continued: “they sailed away, most of them to safety, but some to death”, referencing the *Benares* tragedy. The moving images captured the children cheering and waving as the *Duchess of York* sailed into the harbour. The children enthusiastically sing “My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean” as the captain announces to a small group that they are now in Canada. One boy named Billy Bishop, announcing himself with a thick northern accent, says that he “comes from Middlesbrough and is nine year [sic] old” claiming “Canada’s a good place but not as good as good old Middlesbrough”. Another boy, with a distinctly southern accent, asks his friend why he brought his gas mask. To emphasise that they were no longer needed, the boy replied, “as a souvenir”. As a man in uniform walks the harbour, the narrator records the words of Doreen Goodwin: “‘the first person I saw when I landed was one of the Mounties about whom I had read so much; but where is his horse?’” As the children climbed aboard trains, the narrator reported “‘Canadian trains’ said John Yeoman, ‘are bigger, more powerful, and faster than English trains’”.³⁷

With scenes of evacuees arriving at foster homes, the narrator claimed, “at homes all across Canada, they found a heartfelt welcome waiting for them”; when the children climbed into bed they were enthralled by the “lights that they hadn’t seen for a whole

³⁷ “The Children from Overseas”, 12 min. 16mm, sound, B&W film, National Film Board of Canada, Montreal, Quebec, 1940. http://www.nfb.ca/film/children_from_overseas. The database reveals that the footage of children (include Margaret Beal) at the port was that captured by cameraman aboard the *Duchess of York* on August 19, 1940.

year". As the children started school, the narrator recorded what the "young guests" thought of Canadian schools: "there's boys in the classroom and a master instead of a woman" says one girl. Images of children going to a cafe are shown as children explain that food is not rationed, claiming "that makes a big difference".³⁸ Accompanying scenes at a health clinic, the narrator explains that doctors monitor the children and on average, they have gained between ten and thirty pounds in weight. With images of their first winter, the narrator claims Christmas was "the best discovery" because evacuees find that "it is just the same as the Christmas they have always known three thousand miles away, at home". The final message was clear as the narrator proclaimed: "Mothers of England, we Canadians speak to you from across the sea, we speak to you from the cities, and the prairies, and the mountains of the west, your children are safe and happy in our wide land...we shall guard them well until your great fight is finished and you call them back to you again. In this service, we shall not fail you in your hour of trial". As it would have been shown in cinemas across Canada, the film ensured that Canadians understood the importance of the nation's war guests and Canada's role in protecting them for the Old Country. Once evacuees arrived in Canada they turned from being theoretical people into actual evacuees and thereby became part of the public space.

By October 1940, the University of Toronto magazine framed the evacuees' arrival, stating, "It was obvious from the first moment that here were no deserters fleeing from danger, but rather an advance guard of junior soldiers playing a hard part, marching into unknown lands with courage high and all flags flying".³⁹ Their stoicism was considered exemplary, which would have delighted their parents and even Geoffrey Shakespeare, who told them to "be brave and act as good representatives of Britain". In a speech during his tour of Canada in 1941, Shakespeare claimed, "the children of Britain have played their part in the war-time like everyone else, and they have showed great courage in all the suffering that modern warfare inflicts on the civil population".⁴⁰ Part of this war guest identity was rooted in the evacuees being cast as soldiers in their own right with

³⁸ The new tastes of corn on the cob, ice cream, and hot dogs are all identified by the children.

³⁹ UOTA, *The Varsity*, October 1940 vol 4, no 1, 5.

⁴⁰ IWM, Documents, 10910, "Geoffrey Shakespeare"

their own role in the war. He instructed evacuees to remember “they were British and to hold their heads high”.⁴¹ The ultimate source of stoic inspiration came in October 1940 when fourteen-year-old Princess Elizabeth and ten-year-old Princess Margaret made a radio speech on Children’s Hour that was directed to all evacuees:

My sister Margaret Rose and I feel so much for you as we know from experience what it means to be away from those we love most of all...All of us children who are still at home think continually of our friends and relations who have gone overseas, who have travelled thousands of miles to find a wartime home and a kindly welcome in Canada... but I’m sure you too are often thinking of the old country. I know you won’t forget us. It is just because we are not forgetting you that I want on behalf of all the children at home to send you our love and best wishes to you and your kind hosts.⁴²

The message was clear: do not forget about us; we have not forgotten about you; be brave. Although of royal blood, the Princesses shared with evacuees the common bond of childhood. The speech did not fall on deaf ears as evacuees in Canada such as Patricia Cave wrote to their parents about hearing Princess Elizabeth on the radio.⁴³ At Sheila Westcott’s school, all the evacuees were gathered in the school library to listen to the speech and afterwards they wrote a letter of thanks to the Princess for her work.⁴⁴ Although the King and Queen refused to evacuate the Princesses, the two little girls were transformed into the noblest of comrades for evacuees who were perceived to be stoically coping with their own battle.

The very public status of the evacuees in Canada for the duration of the war meant that they became a part of the Canadian wartime landscape. The evacuee children and Canadian children came together in the shared space of childhood during wartime. Canadian children had to become accustomed to having evacuees in their own private space (home) and public spaces (school, for instance), and the presence of evacuees by

⁴¹ IWM, Documents, 10910, “Geoffrey Shakespeare”.

⁴² “Children’s Hour: Princess Elizabeth”, BBC Archive, accessed March 12, 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/princesselizabeth/6600.shtml>.

⁴³ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

⁴⁴ IWM, Documents, 1750, “Private Papers of Mrs S H Cooley”.

extension became part of the Canadian children's wartime experience.⁴⁵ Dr. Karl Bernhardt, a child psychologist at the Institute of Child Study, presented a series of CBC broadcasts called *Youth on Parade*. In his first episode Bernhardt used evacuees as a point of comparison, reminding Canadian parents that "children ha[d] been bombed, wounded, killed, evacuated, bereaved and made homeless" in the conflict. Bernhardt argued that Canadian children "should be aware of the war" as "they need to know what we are fighting for".⁴⁶ Children needed to feel that they had a part to play in the war. Collecting salvage, buying war saving stamps, working on farms and in their gardens, and giving to the Red Cross were all important contributions; they not only provide a "valuable education" but would prepare Canada's children "for the big job the[y] will have in a few years when they shoulder the important job of reconstruction".⁴⁷ Being hospitable and friendly towards evacuees was a part of Canadian children's wartime work. Sharing the wartime experience, evacuees actively participated in the war effort alongside Canadian children. Grace Blackman decided to raise money for the war effort by setting up a table to sell lemonade and cookies.⁴⁸ Tom Sharp with his "foster sister" Mary Williamson raised \$3.05 for the British War Victims' Fund which earned their photos a spot in the *Toronto Telegram* in September 1943.⁴⁹ June Jolly made candy to sell and filled "ditty bags" for sailors.⁵⁰ Some evacuees took up roles that were more active. In 1942, at the age of fifteen, Les Oliver joined the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers in British Columbia in response to the Japanese threat of invasion. Even when not fundraising, like Canadian children, evacuees still found the war omnipresent in their daily lives.⁵¹ John Hughes lived near an air force base in Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia,

⁴⁵ See conclusion for more.

⁴⁶ UOTA, MS Coll 368, Karl Bernhardt Fonds. Bernhardt's involvements with University of Toronto evacuees enabled him to use evacuees as a point of comparison.

⁴⁷ Ibid. This advice was just as applicable to foster parents.

⁴⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Grace Wilson nee Blackman".

⁴⁹ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family". Also see Mary Williamson and Tom Sharp eds., *Just a Larger Family* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011): 290.

⁵⁰ "A British Child Guest Remembers", Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/29/british-child.html>.

⁵¹ For more on how Canadian children and youth experienced the war, see Cynthia Comacchio, "To Hold High the Torch of Liberty" in *Canada and the Second World War*, Geoffrey Hayes, Mike Bechthold and Matt Symes eds., (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012): 33-65.

where the aircrews were training on various planes. His proximity to the action provided him with much entertainment as he built a plane-spotting seat on the roof of the chimney and, armed with his plane book, would identify them as they flew over.⁵² Military displays also caught the attention of children and evacuees like Tom Sharp witnessed a military sky-jumping exercise in which planes swooped down on spectators.⁵³

As a world conflict, the war was fought in the public space. Although evacuees were sheltered from the physical manifestations of the war, they certainly were not immune to hearing about the war, nor were they ignorant of how events at home were unfolding. Evacuees realised that they were part of the war and reflect that in their letters home. News of the war came to the children through radio broadcasts, discussions in school, and discussions with their foster parents. Although to a much lesser extent than their peers in Britain, food and supply shortages became a part of evacuees' wartime experience in Canada. Evacuees' letters reveal that they were aware of how the war was changing the world around them. On December 14, 1941, Anthony Paish explained to his parents that there was a ban on rubber tires in Canada and that "the only men who are allowed to get tires are the men who own taxis or go to work in cars".⁵⁴ By August 1942, Anthony explained that he was unable to buy what he wanted for his sister Elizabeth's birthday because of war restrictions. Instead, he bought her one "war saving stamp, some sweets, and a bottle of ink". Anthony also relayed food restrictions and shortages as he explained: "Raisins, kinds of tea, bananas, sour oranges, Spanish marmalade, schoolbooks (the ones made in England) English china, felt, colours of wool, Swiss cheese, are gone".⁵⁵ As Anthony prepared to send a Christmas parcel for his parents in October 1942, he noted that his foster mother Mrs. Wilson had suggested foodstuffs as a present so they bought two boxes of cheese and a bag of prunes.⁵⁶ Ten-year-old Anthony clearly understood the Canadian rationing system as he reported to his parents; "The sugar ration is 4 ounces, the tea ration is 1 ounce, coffee 4 ounces. (you can get either coffee or tea, you cannot get

⁵² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "John Hughes".

⁵³ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family".

⁵⁴ IWM, Documents, 3284, "Private Papers of Anthony Paish".

⁵⁵ IWM, Documents, 3283, "Private Papers of Miss E M Paish".

⁵⁶ IWM, Documents, 3284, "Private Papers of Anthony Paish".

both the same week. The price of almost everything has gone up and there is a new income tax".⁵⁷ His further note that "here too you cannot get all you want" signifies that he was aware that Britain, and by extension his family, were under even stricter restrictions.

Foster parents also often received first-hand accounts from the evacuees' parents, sometimes acting as a filter, or conveying bad news to the evacuees. Fifteen-year-old Veronica Owens wrote to her parents on September 15, 1940 in response to news of air raids: "I have had your letter full of air raid warning but I'm afraid you are having evermore now and over London as well". The London Blitz had only just begun so Owens' fears would prove true. However, she also used her letter to provide forceful optimism to her parents: "if they start invading properly they'll get a beating and a victory will be quicker".⁵⁸ It was not only older evacuees who wrote of the war. Eight-year-old Patricia Cave was similarly conscious of the bombing as she wrote to her father on November 5, 1940, I "hope there are not too many air raids in Bristol". This was not a fleeting wish however; she wrote a few days later "I hope you are not having to many air raids over in England I wish you were over here it is so nise [sic] I like it". Her hope became a routine way to close her letters. On November 14, 1940, Patricia decided to include a bit of humour in her war message by asking "Why is Hitler's hair straight - answer because Britannia rules the waves". Patricia was even aware of the sinking of the *Empress of Britain* in 1941, writing to her parents that she hoped her letters did not go down with the ship.⁵⁹ Elizabeth Paish gleefully noted the sinking of the *Bismarck* in June 1941.⁶⁰ Patricia's younger brother was made aware of the war and the fact that their house was apparently bombed as he wrote on April 20, 1941 "the house must look funny with the windows out".⁶¹ Tom Sharp throughout 1941 expressed similar wishes for his family as he too hoped they were not "having many air raids". Discussing air raids

⁵⁷ IWM, Documents, 3283, "Private Papers of Miss E M Paish".

⁵⁸ IWM Documents, 134, "Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens".

⁵⁹ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

⁶⁰ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family". IWM, Documents, 3283, "Private Papers of Miss E M Paish".

⁶¹ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

became an acceptable topic of discussion. Even if some evacuees had not witnessed air raids before their departure, they were well aware of the fact that carpet-bombing had become a German war strategy. In some instances, from this news, the evacuees became very forthright with their opinions as the war dragged on.⁶² In February 15, 1942 Patricia Cave wanted to return home after a “lucky” evacuee girl at church had told her she was going home in April. “Maybe we could come back to you sometime around now I said maybe but very hopeful” she wrote. Patricia seemingly knew that this would be unlikely as she continued, “the dirty japs the stinking rats are just down on the United States”.⁶³ When the tide of war finally did start to turn for the better, evacuees were quick to comment. Veronica Owens wrote on June 13, 1944, “life goes on exactly the same here, somehow I expected lots of upheavals when ‘D day’ actually arrived (do you know why its called D day? We are doing well over in Normandy aren’t we? So much better than I think any of us dared hope”.⁶⁴ Even if far removed from the dangers of war, the events of the war enabled evacuees to share with compatriots a sense of British stoicism.⁶⁵ Evacuees came to the realisation that they were part of bigger events as they made private reflections on public happenings.

The evacuees’ war guest identity made them conspicuous as they entered into public spaces such as schools. Greatly shaping their experience in Canada, school was a public space in which the evacuees spent a significant amount of time and was an important space for the evacuees to integrate into Canadian life. As almost all evacuees arrived in the summer of 1940, they had a few weeks to acclimatise themselves to their new surroundings and foster families before school started. Some, like Tom, Chris, and Bill Sharp, were fortunate enough to be taken up to cottages to enjoy the last gasps of summer. Catherine Anderson was picked up by her foster parents from the Ford reception

⁶² Winnicott argued that children would respond to war news in three ways. For children who were “thrillers”, war news would be “lurid”; timid children would “worry about war news” while the “liable to be depressed child” would “feel that they have a burden or shoulder worry”. Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 25.

⁶³ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

⁶⁴ IWM Documents, 134, “Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens”.

⁶⁵ See Amy Bell, *London Was Ours* (2008) for more on the London Blitz and stoicism.

area and went directly to the family cottage.⁶⁶ As Labour Day approached, the evacuees were prepared to start in their new schools.

Upon the children's arrival, foster parents had to determine what school their evacuee should attend. The placement of CORB children in foster homes had been dependent upon proximity to a school. This ensured that children had access to consistent education, something that the Canadian authorities guaranteed as part of the CORB scheme.⁶⁷ If placed in rural areas or small towns, there was often only one school, making the choice in education an easy one. (Figure 25) Les Oliver attended the only school in Invermere, British Columbia, so rural that one of his classmates rode her horse to school.⁶⁸ David and Joan Gebhard went to live with their cousins in Flin Flon, Manitoba, where schooling options were also limited. In urban areas, CORB children were usually sent to the school closest to their foster home. One evacuee living at 14316-99 Avenue North in Edmonton attended Jasper Place High School, a 4.3km walk away. (Figure 26) An exception to this was when evacuee parents wanted their children to attend a religious school. Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta had separate Catholic education systems so some evacuees, like Maureen Burke, ended up in Catholic schools.⁶⁹ This meant that their religious education could continue, but also meant that the children's journey to school would often be less convenient. Biological and foster parents often discussed children's education in letters. In June 1941, Julie Kemp's mother requested that her foster mother arrange for Julie to attend a Catholic school.⁷⁰ Julie's foster mother Alice Harper evidently satisfied these wishes as Mrs. Kemp wrote in September 1941, I "must tell you how very very pleased we are about the school, it sounds quite ideal...we very glad that she will be in the care of nuns, having few outside distractions, they always seem to be so

⁶⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson".

⁶⁷ LAC, MG20-E256, "Charlotte Whitton Fonds".

⁶⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Les Oliver".

⁶⁹ Maureen Burke went to St Patrick School in London when she lived at Hale St. and then later attended St Angela's college. Author's Evacuee Collection, "Maureen Burke".

⁷⁰ IWM, Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

deeply interested in their pupils over there”.⁷¹ As evacuees came from a variety of Christian denominations, not all had the opportunity to attend religious schools.⁷²

In urban centres, classes were often larger than in rural schools but evacuees were still identified as guest children. This identity would accompany evacuees whether they attended a rural or an urban public school or private school. Whereas some CORB case files record the school where evacuees attended, such information is much more limited for private evacuees. It is certain, however, that some private evacuees such as the Ford evacuees attended public school. The historiographical perception that *all* private evacuees were wealthy, came from “public school” in Britain, and attended private school in Canada is unfounded. It is nonetheless easier to determine whether private evacuees entered private schools than it is to confirm whether they joined public schools.⁷³ Some private evacuees did join private schools as individuals; some were sent as boarders directly by their parents.⁷⁴ Bill Shaw, for instance, attended Ashbury College. For some evacuees, this would have been a continuation of a family tradition of attending boarding school. That the school was in Canada and it was wartime would be largely irrelevant; the precedent for familial separation was already established. Sometimes CORB evacuees were sent to private school by their Canadian hosts. CORB evacuee Peter Lovell, as an example, was sent to St. Michael’s College in Toronto.⁷⁵ Many private schools reduced or deferred their fees as a way to help host parents.⁷⁶ Some evacuees attended private schools as boarders, going to their “host” home only for school holidays or even weekends. In 1942, the University of Toronto Women’s War Service Committee reported that their private evacuees were attending various institutions with fifty-four children attending public school, and thirty-four at private school. Seven of the

⁷¹ IWM, Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

⁷² Jewish children do not appear to have attended Jewish schools.

⁷³ This is because private schools made note of their “guests”, the available sources for private evacuees are often organised by school, and because or by fluke, the majority of private evacuees who wrote letters attended private school.

⁷⁴ LAC, MG30-D245, “Frederick James Ney Fonds”.

⁷⁵ Peter Lovell stayed with Mrs. Barker, an unnominated home at 285 Wolverleigh Blvd in Toronto and attended St Michael’s College. Author’s Evacuee Database.

⁷⁶ UOTA, B1968-0002, “University of Toronto, Women’s War Service Committee”.

seventeen boys and nine of the seventeen girls were boarders at private schools.⁷⁷ The majority of University of Toronto private evacuees were enrolled in public schools.

In unusual cases, foster parents sent the children to a local public school, but subsequently found the education unsuitable and sought alternative arrangements at private school. Patricia Cave started school in Canada in September 1940 at the local public school. Yet after a month of attendance, her foster mother, Marion Simpson, wanted to move Patricia to a private school. She described Patricia's current school as "very near and academically good...[a] much higher standard than English elementary schools though run by the city on tax payer's money".⁷⁸ The issue, according to Marion Simpson, was that "the class of children that attend from the district was good to fair. However, Paddy being intrigued with everything Canadian seemed to think that the rougher a child was the more lively Canadian she was". With this subtle critique of Canadian children, her foster mother explained that the tipping point was that she was "far from happy about some of their friends" whom Patricia and Colin brought home to play. "They were delightful children in many cases but rather the rough diamond" she claimed. The Simpsons ultimately decided to send Patricia to the Bishop Strachan School, a private girl's school in Toronto. Marion justified the decision by explaining that BSS was an "old established school" and was "very desirable" with all kinds of sports, highly trained teachers, beautiful grounds, and an equally beautiful chapel. As well as being a "school that is highly thought of", Marion explained that the school already had "several English war guests", made a reduction of "15% in the fees and allow them to use their old school uniforms until they grow out or wear them out".⁷⁹ The Simpsons chose the school not only because it offered the highest standard of education, but also because it offered a social community that more closely aligned with the social mores in which they thought Patricia should be brought up. The school apparently also met with Patricia's standards as she wrote to her parents "I am going to a new school so is Colin. I

⁷⁷ UOTA, B1968-0002, "University of Toronto, Women's War Service Committee".

⁷⁸ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

⁷⁹ Ibid.

am going to a school called “the Bishop Strachan School”. PPS I like my new school very much”.⁸⁰

The decision for some of these evacuees to enter a private school in Canada was not always based solely on educational grounds. Britons had founded many of the schools around the turn of the century so, by the war, the institutions resembled small, established British communities. The schools were deeply rooted in British tradition; some even hired teachers from Britain. St. Clement’s School for Girls in Toronto had been established in 1901 in the Anglican tradition and during the war hosted twenty-five evacuees.⁸¹ The boy’s boarding school St. Andrew’s College in Aurora, Ontario, hosted twelve “friends” from Britain. The school’s connections to Britain were even expressed on a personal level as the school yearbook *The Review* recorded in the Christmas 1940 edition: “we would like to express our sympathy for the twelve boys whose homes are in the British Isles, and we sincerely hope that they may find in Canada the peace and happiness which Germany had temporarily taken away from their own country”.⁸² Furthermore, boarding schools already had students from across the world. Havergal College, for example, had students from Europe and even two Japanese girls. The evacuees would be known as war guests, rather than “foreign”. Some evacuees therefore had to adjust to boarding school, a space that acted as both their school and foster home. Jean Ingham found no problem with the adjustment as she explained to her parents in September 1942: “in fact in spite of other people’s feelings to the contrary I quite enjoy boarding”. Jean shared a room with two other English evacuees and two Canadian “new girls”.⁸³ Joining a school with British ties and traditions could have transitioned the children into life in Canada more smoothly.⁸⁴ This would also have been true for the

⁸⁰ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

⁸¹ “Our History”, St. Clement’s School, accessed January 12, 2015. <http://www.scs.on.ca/about-scs/history/>

⁸² “Saint Andrew’s College, *Review*, Christmas 1940, 14”,

<http://www.archive.org/stream/chstandrewscolle1940stanuoft#page/14/mode/2up>

⁸³ IWM docs 15369 Miss Jean Ingham Diary by Jean – Fri Sept 42?

⁸⁴ Penny Starns argues, “children evacuated to Canadian boarding schools struggled more than others to retain their national identity. Host families and voluntary youth organisations were prepped to compromise and frequently made allowances for their small charges, whereas staff working within institutions stuck rigidly to pre-existing rules and individual British children in such establishments had no choice but to comply”. But this totally neglects the fact that the big boarding schools extended an offer of hospitality

evacuees who joined Canadian private schools as part of their British schools. For example, Sherborne School for Girls had joined Branksome Hall in Toronto whilst Abinger House merged with Ashbury College. This allowed the children to be absorbed into the Canadian schools but still keep their familial peers and teachers. Bryon House had some pupils join Elmwood and Ashbury, but the remaining children (mostly those too young to attend) were kept together, remaining as an independent community of its own.

Whether evacuees joined public, private, rural, or urban schools, the commonality was that they all had to navigate a new school. The first thing that evacuees noticed upon starting school was that classes were often co-educational. This was a considerable adjustment for evacuees as schools in Britain were usually singled-sex. For Pamela Bland it was a novelty to have boys in her classes.⁸⁵ Evacuees could have initially felt out of place in Canadian classrooms. After all, in their first few weeks at school, many evacuees continued to wear their school uniforms and British clothing, making them stand out even more among their peers. Their accents and being identified by teachers as war guests further distinguished evacuees. June Jolly found “the lack of uniforms and the inclusion of the opposite sex foreign”.⁸⁶ Teachers and school principals were charged with helping evacuees adjust and encouraging their students to exhibit hospitality. This seems to have been successful in the case of Peter Horlock. He said it was strange being in a co-ed class at General Amherst High, but was “really made welcome by the teachers and classmates”.⁸⁷ Others found that their outward appearance made their transition into new peer groups difficult. CORB evacuee John Bland attended Westmore School in Regina,

precisely because they had British roots. The schools were still deeply rooted in British tradition. It is unclear what “pre-existing rules” she refers. Starns, *Oceans Apart*, 94.

⁸⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Pam Mace nee Bland”.

⁸⁶ “A British Child Guest Remembers”, Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/29/british-child.html>.

⁸⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Peter Horlock”. General Amherst High is located in Amherstburg, Ontario.

which, according to him was “in the rough end of town”.⁸⁸ On his first day, John came home with “a black eye after being cheeky to a boy who teased [him] about [his] short trousers”. Apart from such postwar recollections, the extent to which bullying occurred is nearly impossible to investigate. This seemed to be an isolated incident for John, just as any child can experience joining a new school as the “new kid”. There are no direct mentions of such “bullying” or social troubles in schools in any wartime documents relating to evacuation, leaving historians with only postwar recollections to work with. In fact, many evacuees like Catherine Anderson argue that they never experienced teasing or bullying and instead felt welcome.⁸⁹ Bill Shaw joined Ashbury College, which was “run on English Public School lines”. Bill “expected to feel very much a stranger, but in fact did not”.⁹⁰ Although evacuees would have still been identifiable at schools as guest children, over time they were able to integrate into their educational communities. Evacuees sometimes found integrating into school easier if they attended the same school with their foster siblings. Marjorie Everard was fortunate to be placed in the same class as her foster sister Peggy throughout her time in Canada.⁹¹ Other foster siblings extended their responsibility outside of the home and took on the role of protective older sibling at school. By interacting with Canadians, the evacuees like Catherine Anderson soon lost their British accents. Their contrasting outward appearance similarly decreased over time as evacuees increasingly wore Canadian clothing and adopted Canadian styles.

In schools, Canadian children were made aware of their guests’ special status. As a young boy living in Swift Current, a small city in Saskatchewan, Peter Swift was immediately aware that CORB twins Horace and William Fox were evacuees as soon as they arrived at his primary school. Within schools, evacuees were used as symbols of the war, just as they had been in newspapers. Evacuees were routinely asked to talk to their class about their war experience as a didactic exercise for their Canadian classmates. In some schools, the evacuees were used particularly for public events. In 1943, Anthony

⁸⁸ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Pam Mace nee Bland”.

⁸⁹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

⁹⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Bill Shaw”.

⁹¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Peggy Mackey nee Hill”.

Paish participated in Ashbury's Cadet Inspection as part of the junior squad. As a representation of his role, Anthony sent his "battle-scarred program" to his parents with the added explanation that "the bullet holes [were] caused by a sparkler firework and the burnt edges were caused by the explosion of an apparently dead firework...The fireworks were used to make the platoon attack more realistic".⁹² At Branksome Hall in Toronto in 1941, Jean Ingham and the other ninety-four evacuees performed the play "1066 and All That" for Canadian colleagues and friends as a benefit for the Canadian Red Cross's prisoners of war fund.⁹³

For Canadian children having evacuees was a lesson in hospitality, Imperial connections, philanthropy, and wartime contributions. Hosting evacuees was an education and a duty. Dr. Karl Bernhardt in his CBC radio broadcast on *Youth and the School* on May 11, 1943 argued that Canada needed to develop young Canadians who, amongst other things, could "happily live with other people, who had learned how to co-operate, to work and play with others: young Canadians who are sensitive to the feelings of others".⁹⁴ Having evacuee children in their homes, schools, and in their playgrounds would teach Canadian children exactly that. School yearbooks from across the country demonstrated the impact that evacuees had on Canadian children and schools. The 1940 Havergal College *Ludemus* claimed that the arrival of evacuees "made the bonds between England and Canada seem even closer, and have increased our understanding of the mother country".⁹⁵ Similar sentiments were expressed in the 1941, the school yearbook for the Saskatoon Technical High School; the *Techalogue* formally welcomed the school's "guest students who have come from England because of the war" and noted that "they have joined in many activities, and are indeed a credit to our school. Tech. is richer because of their presence in our classes".⁹⁶ Schools consequently began to "take possession" of their evacuees. The 1943 *Techalogue* listed all the students in class 2CB

⁹² IWM, Documents 3284, "Private Papers of Anthony Paish".

⁹³ IWM, Documents 15368, "Private Papers of Miss J Ingham". "1066 and All That" was a musical play originally produced at the Strand Theatre, London in 1935. Reginald Arkell wrote the book and lyrics.

⁹⁴ UOTA, MS Coll 368, Karl Bernhardt Fonds.

⁹⁵ Havergal College, *Ludemus* 1940, 40.

⁹⁶ Saskatoon Public Library (SPL), *Techalogue* 1941, Saskatoon Technical High School.

including evacuee Leslie Dickinson who they labeled “our little English chap”. The next year in 1944, Leslie’s class 3CA affectionately referred to him as their “number one tease”.⁹⁷ Teachers and students in schools across Canada became very fond of their war guests. The positive benefits that evacuation would have on Canadian children, which were proposed in support of evacuation plans in early 1940, were proving true.

At school, evacuees forged friendships with classmates. Some found their common evacuee identity to be a foundation for friendship. Patricia Cave made friends with a “little English war guest” who was just a few months older than she was. The two girls began going to the library together.⁹⁸ Tom Sharp also found other “English boys” in his class at school.⁹⁹ When Mary Hume met fellow evacuee Chris Taylor in Stratford, Ontario, they became friends. This friendship, rooted in a sense of camaraderie, survived the course of the war. In February 1945, Chris wrote in Mary’s autograph book: “Dear Mary, ‘Till the Lights go on again all over the world’ - Best wishes, from your English Pal”.¹⁰⁰ Evacuees also became friends with Canadian children. In some instances, the evacuees’ public image as war guests helped establish friendships in school. Margaret Beal’s “high profile” due to her evacuee identity produced numerous dinner invitations from schoolmates.¹⁰¹ Within two months in Stratford, Mary Hume had made friends with schoolmates. Solidifying their bond, Mary’s new friend Marjorie Bradley wrote in her autograph book on November 11, 1940 “Dear Mary- Remember the “Miss” who scribbled in this. Yours”. Mary’s friend Audrey Goldner added, “My pen is bad, My ink is pale, My love for you will never fail, As long as a monkey has a tail. Your school chum.” Mary Hume made a particularly close friendship with Marjorie Hollenbeck. When the relationship between Mary and her great aunt deteriorated, Mary went to live

⁹⁷ SPL, *Techalogue 1944*, Saskatoon Technical High School.

⁹⁸ Patricia Cave’s foster mother wrote to Patricia’s mother about their friendship. IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

⁹⁹ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”

¹⁰⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Mary Richardson nee Hume”. Author’s Evacuee Database, Christine Taylor. Christine also included her home address back in England.

¹⁰¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolensky nee Beal”.

with Marjorie and her family for the remainder of the war.¹⁰² The move enabled Mary to leave an unhappy household but still maintain her friendship circle despite changing foster homes.

These friendships forged within the classroom often extended beyond the school grounds. As children attending the same school often lived in the surrounding area, these friendships also continued as the children journeyed home. The “walk home” therefore became an important space where evacuees and Canadian children could interact, usually without adult supervision. For Margaret Starr the walk home, even if brief as she lived only a few blocks from the school, allowed her extra time with Eva Stevenson.¹⁰³ The walk home also acted as a space where evacuees’ war guest identity continued to matter. Letters from foster parents provide a window into the socialisation of evacuees. On October 1, 1940, Patricia Silver’s foster mother recounted her view of Patricia walking home from school:

I just wish you could see the kids coming home from school. Pat is in the centre, one kid on each side of her with their arms around her, and the others in front and behind seemingly acting as a body guard, and when they have safely delivered her at the house, they just scatter and act as if they are satisfied that they have delivered her safely home.¹⁰⁴

Patricia’s war guest popularity was transferred out of the classroom and onto the sidewalk. Her Canadian peers embodied Canada’s role as Patricia’s great protector, finding her valuable enough to need escorting home.

As evacuees adjusted socially to Canadian schools, they also had to become accustomed to Canadian educational standards. In 1940, evacuees were initially placed in classes determined by their age. Evacuees’ letters act as a window into how evacuees perceived themselves within this public space. Anthony Paish at Ashbury wrote to his parents in September 1940, “I have started school and it is quite easy”. A month later he

¹⁰² Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Mary Richardson nee Hume”. Mary’s case file lists no reason for the move

¹⁰³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Margaret Vance”.

¹⁰⁴ IWM Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”.

reported, “The work at school is not very hard”.¹⁰⁵ Canadian teachers found that evacuees were often academically ahead of their peers; it was not usual for evacuees to be moved subsequently into other classes to be matched with their intellectual peers. One such child, Patricia Cave, recorded the change for her parents: “when I went to school after a week I was put into another class and I like it better. It is harder.”¹⁰⁶ Catherine Anderson was moved twice before they finally placed her in grade four.¹⁰⁷ Some adjustments caused evacuees to change schools entirely. Sheila Cooley started at a local primary school in Montreal, being placed in grade six, which was appropriate for her age. However the following week she was moved into grade seven and therefore had to move to Westmount Junior High School.¹⁰⁸ Although such moves were supposed to benefit the evacuees, it often meant that they were uprooted from new friends and had to go through the whole process of “fitting in” again. This was not a problem for Christine Leishman when she found the school curriculum for grade six to be easy at her school in Goderich, Ontario.¹⁰⁹ Since there were eight grades in one classroom, Christine was able to progress at her own pace. She finished grade six, seven, and eight within two years.

In evacuees’ letters, the ways they experienced and interacted with the public realm of Canadian education is apparent. Nine-year-old Tom Sharpe reflected, “In Canada, there is eight forms in school but there’s only 5 in high school which is different from England”.¹¹⁰ Subjects and class material were also a major adjustment for evacuees. Evacuees like June Jolly and Catherine Anderson had to learn to use cursive writing.¹¹¹ Patricia Cave in 1941 identified that “there is arithmetic and geography. In Canada geography is called natural science. Funny name.”¹¹² These differences in schooling meant that many evacuees were ahead in subjects like grammar and Latin but behind in

¹⁰⁵ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

¹⁰⁶ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁰⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

¹⁰⁸ IWM, Documents, 1750, “Private Papers of Mrs S H Cooley”.

¹⁰⁹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Christine Bolus nee Leishman”.

¹¹⁰ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹¹¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”. “A British Child Guest Remembers”, Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/29/british-child.html>.

¹¹² IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

French language and Canadian history. French was certainly a new school subject for evacuees. Some adapted well and took interest in learning French. Patricia Cave chose to represent her new French skills writing in November 1940, “We are having a lot of French. La fille est joue avec la pouree (this is me). La fille est sur la chaise (this is me again). For those evacuees like Sheila Cooley living in Quebec, learning French became a requirement for daily life rather than just a school subject. Indeed, some evacuees excelled in Canadian schools. Often at the insistence of the foster parents, many evacuees sent their Canadian report cards to their parents as an expression of their success in the public space. At Christmas 1940, Patricia Cave’s reports read almost all “A”. In 1943, all her reports ranged from “excellent”, “very good”, and two “goods” with no “fairs” demonstrating she had acclimatised well to her Canadian education.¹¹³ The end of each school year also illustrated evacuees’ achievements. At his school’s prize day in 1941, Anthony Paish “won two prizes, one a class prize for 1A (a book Treasure Island) and the other was a 1B prize for merit (a lino cutting set)”. His sister Elizabeth at her school closing did not receive any prizes but was “top of her form and was recommended for a ‘steady and interesting spirit’”.¹¹⁴

Many evacuees experienced stability in their education. As fifty-six percent of CORB evacuees remained with their first placement, the majority would have stayed with the same school or at least continued their education in the same area. The exception to this was if the children had progressed into a secondary school as they rose through the grades. If they remained with their peers, evacuees would be able to maintain their friendship circles. Other evacuees such as Les Oliver stayed with the same foster parents (his uncle), but had to relocate in order to continue his education. The school in Radium Hot Springs where he lived was only a “one-room school” for grades one to eight. To continue his education, Les had to travel to another town, lodge for the week and be collected by his uncle each weekend.¹¹⁵ Evacuees sometimes changed foster families to pursue education. Margaret Burrell moved to Dunnville from Lowbanks, Ontario, so she

¹¹³ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹¹⁴ IWM, Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

¹¹⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”.

could attend high school while Charles Harmsworth was moved in 1944 from Stookumchuk, British Columbia, to Kimberley “to enable [him] to attend a larger school”. Where possible, local childcare authorities tried to find foster homes for children that would enable them to attend the same school. These points to the efforts of Canadian authorities to provide stability for the evacuees. Some evacuees were fortunate enough to experience long periods of stability at school. Helen Heely, for instance, spent three years at the same high school, West Technical School in Toronto.¹¹⁶ Long periods at the same school permitted time for evacuees to develop stable friendships and benefit from a sense of normality and routine. Over time, evacuees would become similar to their Canadian peers in physical appearance, accent, and even behaviour. Yet time did not entirely erase evacuees’ war guest identity. Although their peers would still be aware that they were from Britain, evacuees were able to become “part of the gang”.

The education the evacuees received in Canada guided the direction of their later lives. Parents like Colin Cave’s father used evacuation as a chance to think about their children’s future profession, even if they were young. Because of some emotional struggles due to separation, Colin Cave’s father wrote to his foster parents on November 26, 1942 to express his thoughts on Colin’s suitability for particular work. He decided that Colin was “not cut out for the law” like himself but instead thought Colin may be “a most successful aero-engineer”.¹¹⁷ CORB parents similarly expressed their wishes for their children’s futures and these were often recorded in their children’s case files. Winnifred Burke’s parents “wished her to be a teacher” while they saw her sister Elizabeth as being “most suited to office work or hotel receptionist”.¹¹⁸ Other parents like those of Dorothy Crawford were evidently willing to “leave question of career in the very capable hands of her foster parents”.¹¹⁹ These wishes became increasingly important as the children moved through the education system.

¹¹⁶ Author’s Evacuee Database, Charles Harmsworth; Margaret Burrell, Helen Heely.

¹¹⁷ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹¹⁸ Author’s Evacuee Database, Winnifred and Elizabeth Burke.

¹¹⁹ Author’s Evacuee Database, Dorothy Crawford.

In Canada, evacuees received a stable education that many of their peers in Britain did not. Air raids and a lack of teachers made education in some parts of the country unreliable or even non-existent.¹²⁰ Furthermore, evacuees, particularly those who arrived between the ages of twelve and fifteen, had access to additional or extended education. A number of evacuees reached matriculation whilst in Canada.¹²¹ Finishing secondary school education in Canada meant that they would not have to navigate the British school system upon return. The British education system underwent significant reforms during the war with the final product being the *Butler Act* passed in 1944, which created a tripartite education system. Some evacuees who graduated from secondary school were fortunate enough to earn places at Canadian universities. For example, by 1942 five of the private evacuees associated with the University of Toronto had been given places at the university. Of the five, three were girls and two boys, one girl and two boys had entered at the age of sixteen while one of the boys had received a scholarship.¹²² Evacuees could also receive technical training or complete specialised courses. CORB evacuee Joan Carlton completed a business course. Such training or university education that produced new opportunities was a product of evacuation. Some evacuees may not have had the opportunity to attend university in Britain because of available finances; even for those who could afford to attend university, there were limited opportunities during the war. But with educational opportunities in Canada and financial support from foster parents, evacuation actually enabled evacuees to receive an extended education that otherwise would not have been available to them.¹²³ If they had remained in Britain,

¹²⁰ Teachers became a reserved occupation but evacuation occurred. Some schools had to transfer to half days so as to accommodate all children. Stephen Hussey, "The School Air-Raid Shelter: Rethinking Wartime Pedagogies" *History of Education Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (2003): 517-539, Emma Lautman, "'War in the Classroom?': Children, Childhood, and Educational Experiences in Britain during the Second World War, 1939-1945" (PhD diss., University of Nottingham, In progress).

¹²¹ Historically, matriculation is the process of joining or entering a school, usually university.

¹²² TNA, DO 131/8, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Offer from University of Toronto". UOTA, University of Toronto, B1968-0002, Women's War Service Committee.

¹²³ It has been argued that children's education suffered as a result of war in Britain. See Emma Lautman, "'The First Casualty of War?': Education and schooling in Britain during WWII" (Unpublished MA diss., University of Nottingham, 2012).

university education itself would have been more limited because of limited finances and wartime circumstances.¹²⁴

In addition to the evacuees' formal educational experiences, while in Canada all evacuees regardless of age received a common education in the public space, a cultural education that taught them about the Anglo-Canadian world. In the early debates over evacuation, it was argued that evacuees would receive a cultural education in Canada; they would not only learn about travel and the Empire, but also experience it first-hand. Geoffrey Shakespeare's speech "A New Imperial Policy" reported after a few years that CORB evacuees had progressed well in their education as "in spite of difficulties in adapting to a strange curriculum they have responded admirably to their new schools".¹²⁵ According to Shakespeare, although the Canadian teachers had recorded that the evacuees were behind Canadian children in mathematics and science, they showed "greater general knowledge". Further, Shakespeare argued that the experience of wartime conditions and their evacuation "ha[d] given them a spirit of sturdy independence" and therefore was an education in itself. He argued:

nothing develops the mind of a child so much as travel and the opportunity to study new conditions and different customs and scenery. When our children return it will be found that they have acquired a breadth and independence of outlook and a wider vision that may well put them ahead of those children to whom these opportunities were denied.¹²⁶

Not only did evacuation save them from the war, but it also set them in good standing for the future.

The experiences of evacuees in Canadian schools were most certainly varied. Some evacuees struggled socially or academically, while others flourished. Their education not only played a significant role in their overall evacuation experience, but would also have life-long effects. Although the children's education was initially disrupted by their

¹²⁴ For more on universities in Britain during the war see, P.H.J.H Gosden, *Education in the Second World War* (London, Methuen, 1976).

¹²⁵ TNA, DO 131/28, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Speeches and General Surveys".

¹²⁶ Ibid.

transition into Canadian schools, all evacuees received consistent education that was uninterrupted by bombings like that of their peers in Britain. The constant education available to them, even if they had negative experiences, reflects the best efforts of Canadian officials to provide the highest standard of care for evacuees. Their evacuation furthermore provided an alternative education experience to that of their peers in Britain. For some, their Canadian education was a golden opportunity; they were able to flourish in schools, extend their education, and gain confidence in the public space. This formal education and a cultural education would stay with many evacuees for the rest of their lives.¹²⁷

Many parents and foster parents also wanted the evacuees to continue their religious education while in Canada and therefore the church became another space for evacuees to interact with Canadians. Individual families of course determined this. As the historiography of evacuation has not examined the religion of CORB evacuees, any correlation between evacuees' foster homes and their denomination has been omitted. Figure 16 shows that the majority of CORB evacuees belonged to the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church. Although CORB's mandate was to place children in homes similar to their own, including religion, it is impossible to estimate how many evacuees were placed in homes of the same religious denomination as themselves. It is, however, possible to see how many children moved to another foster home for religious reasons. Daphne and Laila Nardell were placed with the Pearsons, the family of a Canadian sea captain, in Vancouver. About six months later, the girls were transferred to the Jewish home of Mr. and Mrs. Freedman, a middle-aged couple. According to Laila, their move was because the Jewish authorities had stepped in and "thought it best that [they] stay with a Jewish family". If true, it is unclear why Canadian authorities had not succeeded in initially finding them a Jewish foster family and why Jewish authorities

¹²⁷ Postwar sources in Chapter five will uncover educational difficulties when evacuees returned to Britain. In this way, a "cultural education" can be conceptualised similarly to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the *habitus* and his "cultural capital". See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1984.

were permitted to intervene.¹²⁸ Although perhaps guided with the best intentions, the move proved to be unsuccessful. Sadly, not long after their arrival, Mrs. Freedman allegedly “tried to commit suicide because of a domestic situation”. The Freedmans’ Protestant friends, the Montgomerys, took the children for about a year after which they were once again moved to a Jewish home. The girls then lived with the Brandts, an elderly widow and her two daughters who soon “wearied of two boisterous girls”. Daphne had become a very happy child and as the authorities came to move the children she clung to the kitchen-table legs screaming that she would not be moved once again. They were moved on to the Steiners, Austrian immigrants who arrived in Vancouver in the 1930s. In comparison to their “idyllic period” with the Montgomery family, their time with the Steiners was much less happy. According to Laila, Mrs. Steiner had taken them because she believed that “if she took in two little evacuees God would spare her family in Austria”.¹²⁹ Yet according to the girls, Mrs. Steiner was volatile. Although authorities may have thought children should have been matched with foster families by religion, the Nardell case illustrates that much more needed to be considered. The happiest foster home may not have matched the evacuees’ religion.

Although prayer can be a very private experience, religion is also a public space, shared amongst its followers. Some biological parents wanted their children to continue their religious education in Canada. Julie Kemp’s mother felt that it was “essential for Julia to be brought up as a Catholic”.¹³⁰ For Donald and Dorothy Chandler their religious education began almost immediately, as their arrival in Upper Cape, New Brunswick, happened to coincide with an annual picnic held at the local United Church. This provided an opportunity for their foster parents to show off their guests to family, friends, and neighbours.¹³¹ Despite being listed as Anglican on her CORB file, Margaret Burt and

¹²⁸ Author’s Evacuee Database, Laila Nardell. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Laila Goodman nee Nardell”. It is unclear if this was a private Jewish organisation and how they heard of the case. It may be possible that Canadian authorities, in an attempt to satisfy CORB’s placement requirements, consulted with a Jewish organisation to find the children a Jewish home.

¹²⁹ Author’s Evacuee Database, Laila Nardell. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Laila Goodman nee Nardell”.

¹³⁰ IWM, Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

¹³¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Donald Stephen Chandler”.

her siblings were all placed with United Church families. Margaret's foster family did not attend church, but ensured that she did.¹³² Foster parents like those of Thomas Richard ensured that evacuees attended church, despite not attending themselves. They made special arrangements for Thomas to be picked up every Sunday morning by the leader of the Anglican community.¹³³ For those evacuees who were religious, maintaining their faith while in Canada would have been an important part of maintaining consistency in their lives. It was in religion, prayer, and attending church that children could find something familiar, even so far from home.

Evacuees also frequently attended Sunday school and church activities, which provided a space to continue their religious education and a place where the evacuees could interact with Canadian children with similar views and beliefs. In the church choir, Dennis Drew formed a friendship with Canadian Jimmy Johnson.¹³⁴ Other children like Tom Sharp participated in choirs. Tom wrote often to his parents about his progress; in 1942, he explained that he had joined the choir at church and wore a surplice. In 1944, he wrote to them that he was going to sing one verse of a carol by himself at the church's annual candlelight service.¹³⁵ Patricia and Colin Cave also regularly attended church and Patricia would refer to her attendance in her letters. On November 5, 1940, she explained to her parents "I could not write on the weekend I mean I could but I went to Sunday school and I had to do a lot of things".¹³⁶ Songs were a normal part of Sunday school and sometimes these too related to the war. Mary Hume, for instance, one day had to sing "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" which opens with the line "For Those in Peril on the Sea". For Mary, this seemed a disturbing choice.¹³⁷ For Elizabeth and Anthony Paish, attending church brought the added experience of sometimes traversing the route to

¹³² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Burt Hamilton".

¹³³ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Richard Thomas". He had been confirmed by the Bishop of London in St. Pauls Cathedral and my conviction to this faith was assumed.

¹³⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Dennis Drew".

¹³⁵ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family"

¹³⁶ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

¹³⁷ Evacuee Collection, "Mary Richardson nee Hume". This memory has remained with Mary for over seventy-five years.

church by themselves. Religious education was also carried over into other spaces; even at a summer camp, Anthony Paish continued to attend church.¹³⁸

Holidays and celebrations were another form of public space where evacuees could receive a cultural education, learning Canadian customs while interacting with other evacuees and Canadian children and adults. Holidays provided Canadians with an opportunity to contribute to evacuees, special treatment they received because of their war guest status. Evacuees' letters reveal their experiences in this public space. Valentine's Day captured the attention of many evacuees, particularly because of Canada's consumer culture surrounding the holiday. As the evacuees' first Valentine's Day since arriving in Canada approached in 1941, Patricia Cave had already been educated on the quintessential elements of the tradition. Patricia's foster mother gave her special red ink and a box of candies and explained the holiday. Patricia decided to explain the holiday to her parents, writing, "The people in Canada give people they like valentines. The people in England do not make a fuss of valentines day [sic] but of course the Canadians do". To include her parents in the holiday Patricia sent a little red heart that, even if late, would not lose its meaning. Patricia's brother Colin also sent a card because "In Canada people give valentines to the people they love". At school, Colin received 10 Valentines and Patricia 18, which she classified as "cute".¹³⁹ Patricia's teacher Miss Robertson even gave the children ice cream.¹⁴⁰ Other evacuees like Julie Kemp also saw the holiday as an opportunity to show their parents affection despite their lengthy separation. For that reason, Valentine's Day was one of the most important symbolic holidays for evacuees. Julie Kemp sent her parents numerous Valentine's Day cards over the years, some homemade and some store-bought, but all with the same sentiments.¹⁴¹ Valentine's Day was a time for evacuees to express their love, but also to

¹³⁸ IWM Documents, 3284, "Private Papers of Anthony Paish".

¹³⁹ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

¹⁴⁰ Patricia wrote "in the end there was 'three cheers for Miss Robertson' VERY VERY LOUD almost shook the school down". Ibid.

¹⁴¹ IWM, Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

receive warm wishes from their new Canadian friends, a new experience for most evacuees.¹⁴²

Easter celebrations would have been familiar for evacuees. For his first Easter in Canada, Anthony Paish wrote to his parents that he and his sister Elizabeth had received “a lot of eggs” and a number of gifts, which included “a small Chinese house from his foster mother and a “sort of fork to use in the garden”. Presents were followed by a church service. At Easter 1943, Anthony received a war stamp as a gift.¹⁴³ Colin Cave also recorded how he was celebrating Easter in 1941, when he was showered with Easter presents that included ten eggs, a shirt and a tie, and braces for his suit. At boarding school in 1941, Patricia Cave received silk stockings, a rose-coloured dress, a chocolate hen, and a bag, which she described as an “almost grown up one” from her roommate. A friend of their foster father also gave Patricia and Colin a gift of a large chocolate egg. This friend was an Englishman who, like Patricia and Colin, was born in Bristol and therefore felt a connection with the children and used Easter as an opportunity to show his hospitality.¹⁴⁴

Celebrating St. George’s Day in Canada enabled evacuees to join a community of Canadians who still felt deeply connected to England. As the celebration would have been familiar to them, English evacuees could easily engage in public events. Their war guest status, however, meant that evacuees were again used as symbols of Britain and the war. In 1941, the Sherborne evacuees at Branksome Hall such as Veronica Owens were called upon to help sell programs at the “Salute to Britain” in Toronto during what Veronica called “a very special week for St. George’s week”. Who better to sell programs than evacuee children from Britain? The evacuees sang “God Save the King” amongst Canadians as the Mendelsohn Choir and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra played. Recasting St. George’s Day for the war, the event saw all the flags of countries overrun by war and the flags of Britain’s allies marched in. As part of the audience, evacuees

¹⁴² Margaret remembers receiving Valentine’s day from one boy (David Gardiner) in class who went on to be an actor in Canada. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Burt Hamilton”.

¹⁴³ IWM, Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

¹⁴⁴ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

shared in the singing of songs like “They’ll Always Be an England” and “Onwards Christian Soldiers”.¹⁴⁵ As a sign of support, a section of the event was broadcast, and a record of it was flown over to England by bomber and broadcast on St. George’s Day in England. Imagining the broadcast traversing such distance and taking ownership of her part within it, Veronica Owens asked her parents “did you hear it?”¹⁴⁶ Anthony Paish similarly participated in Empire Day celebrations in 1941 that provided him with the fascinating sight of setting off fireworks.¹⁴⁷ His sister was drawn upon to participate in a church parade for the occasion.¹⁴⁸ Empire Day may have been familiar to evacuees but celebrating it in the Empire rather than the metropole would have been a slightly different context. Evacuees again had a symbolic role to play at these celebrations, even if they were not always conscious of it. For evacuees, these events had familiar elements, in songs or symbolism. Evacuees would have understood these elements, but taking part in the events in Canada was a new experience and an opportunity to integrate into the public space.

The tradition of dressing up and trick or treating on All Hallow’s Eve was new for the children.¹⁴⁹ The holiday not only captured the interest of evacuees, but also provided a cultural education for the children in the public space. Writing to their parents about the holiday, evacuees revealed how they had learned to navigate the public realm. In 1940,

¹⁴⁵ IWM Documents, 134, “Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens”. She is writing this in letters home.

¹⁴⁶ IWM Documents, 134, “Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens”.

¹⁴⁷ Jim English argues that Empire Day was not limited to children in Britain and was more far-reaching. Jim English, “Empire Day in Britain, 1904-1958”, *The Historical Journal* 49, no 1. (2006): 247-276. Mary Vipond in her article argues that the CBC’s Empire Day broadcast in 1939 that featured the King was the “climax” of the royal tour. This provided extra vigour for Empire Day celebrations following the Royal tour and continued throughout the war. Mary Vipond, “The Mass Media in Canadian History: The Empire Day Broadcast of 1939”, *Journal of Canadian Historical Association* 14, (2003): 1-21. It is argued that the principal source of the idea of celebrating Empire Day as a children’s festival was Mrs. Clementina Fessenden of Hamilton, Ontario, in the late 1890s. See Robert Stamp, “Empire Day in the Schools of Ontario: The Training of Young Imperialists,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8 (1973): 32-42 and Cecilia Morgan, “History, Nation, and Empire: Gender and Southern Ontario Historical Societies, 1890-1920s”, *Canadian Historical Review* 82 (2001): 491-528.

¹⁴⁸ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”. Anthony wrote to his parents about the event.

¹⁴⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Burt Hamilton”. Halloween trick or treating was a new experience. The boys in the neighbourhood were adept at removing furniture from front porches and putting it in trees.

Patricia Cave explained what she had learned of the tradition to her parents: “On Halloween night you dress up in anything that disguises you and I am going to dress up in a sheet for a ghost with a ghost mask. You go to people’s houses and they make you sing and they guess who you are by your voice. I got this information from aunty”.¹⁵⁰ For June Jolly the holiday became intriguing when her foster mother instructed the children to duck for apples.¹⁵¹ For evacuees, the best part of the holiday was the free candy. Making sure to report to her parents about her first Halloween, Patricia Cave wrote, “It was lovely on Halloween. We got 7 to 8 pounds of sweets...and 18 apples and a box of peanuts. I mean monkey nuts. They call them peanuts in Canada”.¹⁵² Inventing costumes brought additional fun; Joan Ambridge decided to dress as a Quaker.¹⁵³ Halloween celebrations also became a space for evacuees to share and interact with Canadian children. In 1941, Anthony Paish reported to his parents that his sister dressed up as Queen Victoria and went to a party at her school. Unable to attend the party himself, Anthony experienced the holiday by helping his foster mother hand out treats to callers, even if he did not fully understand the process. He explained to his parents, “The first people who came got the most apples for I didn’t know how many to give to each (after that Mrs. Wilson gave the apples). I was allowed to stay up till nine that night. Next morning I got up later than usual”.¹⁵⁴ By 1943 as the war dragged on, the holiday had to be incorporated into the war effort. By redirecting money that individuals would have spent on treats, the holiday became another way to contribute to the war effort. Newspapers like the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* printed signs that people could place on their doors that read: “HALLOWE’EN IN WARTIME This card signifies that we have donated to the KINSMEN MILK for BRITAIN FUND the amount of money we usually spend on Hallowe’en treat”.¹⁵⁵ Although by 1943 Anthony had become accustomed to trick or treat traditions, he reflected on the impact the war was having on the holiday. He

¹⁵⁰ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁵¹ “A British Child Guest Remembers”, Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/29/british-child.html>.

¹⁵² IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁵³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Joan Ambridge”.

¹⁵⁴ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

¹⁵⁵ SPL, PM-94-159, World War II – Home Front, “Hallowe’en in Wartime”.

explained to his parents that there were “just enough apples to go round for all the callers”.¹⁵⁶ Also in 1943, Tom Sharp wrote to his mother to report that the day before had been “Hallowe’en but there was no “shelling out”...because of the scarcity of candies”. The shortages, however, led Tom and his foster sister Mary to a friend’s party to play games. Tom reported that he “dressed up as Christopher Robin with [his] red dressing-gown” while his foster sister dressed up as a sailor and their friends as an Eskimo and a medieval lady.¹⁵⁷ Even as Halloween transformed to suit the circumstances of the war, evacuees came to understand and enjoy the Canadian tradition which prominently stands out in evacuees’ memories of their time in Canada.

Although Christmas was not an unfamiliar holiday for evacuees, celebrations in Canada uncovered new traditions.¹⁵⁸ Evacuees made sense of their place by recording some of the differences in traditions. For her first Christmas, Patricia Cave noted that Christmas in Canada was similar to that at home, but found the tree to be the biggest difference. She wrote home “in Canada you don’t put the presents on the tree you put them around the bottom on the tree”.¹⁵⁹ For Catherine Anderson whose family had had a little artificial folding tree in England, when her foster parents brought in a big Scotch pine with its powerful scent it was a marvel to her.¹⁶⁰ June Jolly found real Christmas trees a “wonder”, especially as her foster family had their tree sprayed white and decorated with blue fairy lights.¹⁶¹ For Les Oliver, new foods including oyster cocktails and turkey with all the trimmings contrasted with his English Christmas.¹⁶² Something else which was new for some evacuees, particularly those living in Toronto, was that

¹⁵⁶ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”. Holidays in the public space act as an opportunity for individuals to come together in a common celebration and can build a sense of identity. Another a different context, see Kenneth Moss, “St. Patrick’s Day Celebrations and the Formation of Irish-American Identity, 1845-1875, *Journal of Social History* 29, no 1 (1995): 125-148.

¹⁵⁷ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹⁵⁸ Jewish children would have been unlikely to celebrate Christmas.

¹⁵⁹ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁶⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

¹⁶¹ “A British Child Guest Remembers”, Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/29/british-child.html>. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “June Jolly”.

¹⁶² Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”.

Christmas was publicly celebrated with a Santa Claus parade.¹⁶³ Grace Blackman had the unique opportunity to see the parade from a room in a tall building overlooking the street due to being hospitalised as a diphtheria carrier.¹⁶⁴ Evacuees such as Patricia Cave wrote to their parents about the spectacle. For Patricia, the merit of the parade was that “the people in it were so funny”.¹⁶⁵ In recognition that Christmas traditions might be different in Canada, some biological parents asked foster parents to ensure that their way of celebration not be forgotten. Julie Kemp’s mother, for instance, asked her foster mother to have Julie draw some Christmas cards and buy a little present for someone so she would “learn to give as well as receive”. Her last request was that Julie be given a “cardboard crib” to put on her dressing table so she would associate the crib with Christmas rather than the tree.¹⁶⁶

The holiday was also an opportunity for evacuees to reconnect with their families in Britain. On Christmas morning, June Jolly always made a point to shout her Christmas greetings to her family in England just after the King’s speech, as she knew her parents were doing the same.¹⁶⁷ Evacuee parents sent presents to their children, although this became increasingly difficult due to clothing shortages and the rate at which ships were lost in the Atlantic.¹⁶⁸ However, this did not deter evacuees from sending their thanks. In 1942, Tom Sharp wrote, “Dear Mother, I thank you very much for the present to me although it was lost, or so we presume”.¹⁶⁹ For their first Christmas away from home, Patricia and Colin Cave received a doll and a ship from their parents. Perhaps with

¹⁶³ The parade was started in 1905 and is the longest running children’s parade in the world. By 1913, Eaton’s department store arranged for santa to be pulled by live reindeer specifically imported from Labrador. Steve Penfold argues that the parade emerged as a “commercial spectacle” and became a “metropolitan spectacle” that projected power to an economic and cultural space. Steve Penfold, “The Eaton’s Santa Claus Parade and the Making of a Metropolitan Spectacle, 1905-1982”, *Histoire sociale/Social history* 44, Issue 87, (2011): 1-28. “The History”, The Santa Claus Parade, accessed April 2, 2015. <http://www.thesantaclausparade.com/about#history>.

¹⁶⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Grace Wilson nee Blackman”.

¹⁶⁵ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁶⁶ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

¹⁶⁷ “A British Child Guest Remembers”, Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/29/british-child.html>.

¹⁶⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Audrey Scholes nee Buxton”.

¹⁶⁹ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

thoughts of home in mind, Colin decided to name his ship “the Victory” after Lord Nelson’s ship.¹⁷⁰ As foster parents recognised that parents would be missing their children greatly, some used letters to share their child’s Christmas experience. Patricia Silver’s foster mother made light of the situation in 1944 after Patricia’s fourth Christmas away, writing:

It was good to know that you were able to enjoy a reasonably good xmas...we hope with you, though, that the next one will be all that you could desire and that miss pat will be with you to just make it perfect, but I’ll warn you, that you will have to buy, beg, borrow or steal a drum stick off some kind of fowl for her xmas dinner, or there will be war in the camp.¹⁷¹

Christmas was a holiday that emphasised the evacuees’ separation from their families at home.

While evacuees were absent from their homes in Britain, their presence in Canada made them the recipients of piles of presents from their foster families. Foster parents, especially for evacuees’ first Christmas, often chose quintessential gifts for their British guests. Evacuees religiously noted their “Canadian” Christmas presents. Patricia Cave recorded that she and Colin received very Canadian items such a hockey stick, a puck, a six-foot toboggan, and a game called “parchuzi” [sic] and “bingo”.¹⁷² Les Oliver and Catherine Anderson, like many others, were given the quintessential Canadian present of a pair of skates for their first Christmas.¹⁷³ As John Macnab arrived in Canada and still wrote to Santa, he would magically receive exactly what he requested. Yet Christmas became an opportunity for other Canadians to give presents to evacuees as a sign of hospitality and goodwill. Margaret Beal received many presents from her neighbours in Winnipeg during her first Christmas in Canada.¹⁷⁴ In 1942, Tom Sharp received 50 cents from Mr. and Mrs. Peterkin, friends of his foster parents, to which he returned the gesture

¹⁷⁰ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁷¹ IWM, Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”.

¹⁷² IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁷³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”.

¹⁷⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Smolensky nee Beal”.

by curiously gifting them Kleenex.¹⁷⁵ As some evacuees were placed in boarding schools, Christmas became a time when they would be sent to stay with families who wanted to provide a happy holiday for “war guests”. One year, Bill Shaw stayed with the Maras in Toronto who “spoiled him rotten”.¹⁷⁶

Christmas was not simply a domestic celebration for evacuees. At Christmas time, the “war guest” cause was elevated in the public sphere. Leonora Williams, the Headmistress of Byron House, recorded Canadians’ generosity as she wrote to evacuees’ parents that “their [children’s] first Christmas in Canada will never be forgotten as so many associations and organisations and individuals came to our assistance in providing sumptuous fare, seasonable entertainment, Christmas stockings, games and toys.”¹⁷⁷ The St. George’s Society of Toronto contributed gifts for some of the evacuees in Toronto out of their own funds.¹⁷⁸ The Toronto branch of the Lions even had a “Lions British Child War Victims Fund”. The University of Toronto Women’s War Service Committee decided to send out a Christmas card to each evacuee under its charge.¹⁷⁹ For their special status as “war guests”, Canadians went out of their way to organise public celebrations for the children. In 1940, a large Christmas party was held for 150 evacuees at the Chateau Laurier. The fact that the party was officially “hosted” by the navy, air force, military officers in Ottawa drew a subtle comparison between the soldiers and evacuees who had their own war to endure.¹⁸⁰ This was certainly an event that even the evacuees knew was special; Anthony Paish made sure to write home to his parents with the news.¹⁸¹ As 1940 was the first Christmas in Canada for the evacuees, holding a party for them in the finest hotel in the nation’s capital symbolised just how much the children were revered as Canada’s “war guests”. The *Ottawa Citizen* reported that Santa Claus cut

¹⁷⁵ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹⁷⁶ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Bill Shaw”.

¹⁷⁷ IWM Documents, 1816, “Private Papers of Miss L M Williams”.

¹⁷⁸ COTA, 1575, series 1093, “St. George Society of Toronto”.

¹⁷⁹ COTA, 233174, series 240, subseries 8, file 90, “Lions Club Pamphlet, 1943”. UOTA, B1968-0002, “University of Toronto, Women’s War Service Committee”.

¹⁸⁰ IWM Documents, 1816, “Private Papers of Miss L M Williams”.

¹⁸¹ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

a huge Christmas cake and that each child was given two British gifts”.¹⁸² Yet Ottawa was not the only place where this occurred. John Hughes, among other evacuees living in the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia, was invited to Christmas parties at the Greenwood air force base because RAF pilots trained there. The largest evacuee party was held in Winnipeg at the Legislative Building. An undated pamphlet entitled “Our Guests from Britain” stated that the gathering was “to relieve the chill of absence from loved ones in the hearts of two hundred and forty British girls and boys who are with us for the duration of the war”. The children assembled for a photo in front of the grand staircase, enjoyed entertainment, and for fifteen minutes, the party went live on the radio. With typical symbolism, the children sang, “There’ll Always Be an England” and the festive “Jingle Bells”. The pamphlet concluded that those involved with organising the party had “feelings of gladness in that we are able to contribute some measure of happiness to them”.¹⁸³ Christmas was a holiday that ensured that evacuees remained in the public space and implored Canadians to treat their small guests with increased hospitality.

A significant amount of the evacuees’ time in Canada, when not at school, was spent at play and in unorganised, unsupervised activities. Play was a public space in which evacuees were able to experience life in Canada while gaining a socio-cultural education. It was in play that evacuees interacted with Canadian children. Historians have shied away from examining children’s play, primarily because it is difficult to examine; children play but often fail to reflect their activities and their perceptions around their play. Play has an important therapeutic value that could have helped the children work through some of the struggles associated with their evacuation.¹⁸⁴ Play provided a

¹⁸² “British Child Guests Entertained at Party”, *Ottawa Citizen*, December 16, 1940. Just what these “British gifts” were was not listed.

¹⁸³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Joyce Boldero”.

¹⁸⁴ Winnicott highlighted the importance of play for evacuees in a 1945 radio broadcast “Home Again”. He reminded parents that play is not just pleasure, it is essential to his well-being. Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 45. According to Winnicott, “playing is itself a therapy”. Caldwell and Joyce, *Reading Winnicott*, 233. Phyllis Greenacre argued that there was a correlation between child’s play and the creation of the imagination and creativity. Phyllis Greenacre, “Play in Relation to the Creative Imagination”, *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 14 (1959): 61-80.

distraction, giving the children something to focus on and fill their time. During their stay in Canada, the evacuees did encounter new games and types of play. Yet at the same time, their letters show that child's play was also borderless; games may have been different in Britain, but a child's desire to play was shared by British and Canadian children. Furthermore, play also acted as a space for the children to lead their own activities, creating a sense of independence and place to exercise autonomy.

Evacuees were often given board games that could be played inside the house with other children and could teach the need for rules, strategy, and other important competitive lessons.¹⁸⁵ Evacuees wrote home about these games and this was an important way that the children could communicate their daily lives and negotiate their relationships. Anthony Paish, for instance, recorded that when his friend evacuee Andrew came from Ashbury to visit, the boys played Monopoly together. Anthony also sometimes hosted other evacuee children for play dates. On November 30, 1941, Anthony wrote that the Rowatts had visited the previous day and the children had played Chinese checkers. Board games were a source of entertainment on rainy days, but also a chance to build self-confidence. In 1941, Anthony wanted to tell his parents just how many card games they had mastered, noting, "we play cards a lot here and we know all these card games now: solitaires, eights, rickety anne, donkey, old maid, rummy, snap and demon patience".¹⁸⁶ Even Anthony's sister Elizabeth wrote home to share her thoughts on new Canadian games. In March 1944, Elizabeth wrote, "There is a craze at school for a thing called an Ouija board. It is a very shiny board with the alphabet, the numbers 1 to 10 and yes and no marked on it... apparently it is something to do with electricity in the fingertips".¹⁸⁷ The war was even inescapable for children as their play often became militarised. Soldiers were a common toy for boys like Tom Sharp; Anthony

¹⁸⁵ For more on board games see, Romita Ray, "The Beast in a Box: Playing with Empire in Early Nineteenth-century Britain", *Visual Resources* 22 no 1 (2006):7-31. Scott Nicholson, "Playing in the Past: A History of Games, Toys, and Puzzles in North American Libraries" *The Library Quarterly* 83, no. 4 (2013): 341-361. Christopher Reekie, "Masters of the Board", *History Scotland* 13 no 4. (2013): 16-21.

¹⁸⁶ IWM Documents, 3284, "Private Papers of Anthony Paish".

¹⁸⁷ IWM, Documents, 3283, "Private Papers of Miss E M Paish".

Paish also was given a model airplane that brought his collection up to two Spitfires.¹⁸⁸ Elizabeth enjoyed the war-themed game, Tri-tactics that she had brought with her to Canada.¹⁸⁹ Knitting became a good pastime for children, particularly as a way to contribute to the war effort. Patricia Cave was taught to knit with four needles when she arrived in Canada and was “fascinated with it” according to her foster mother.¹⁹⁰ Knitting was not only for female evacuees, as Anthony Paish proudly reported his knitting progress to his parents in 1941: “last week Mrs. Wilson taught me to knit. I have knitted 4 or 5 rows by myself now”.¹⁹¹ Other self-instructive activities like reading had an important role. Anthony Paish wrote to his parents in 1941 to explain that he and his sister were reading St. Matthew with their foster mother in the evenings and he would read St. John by himself.¹⁹² To encourage evacuees to read and as a helpful contribution to their intellectual development, some evacuees were given a magazine called “The Bridge”.¹⁹³ Furthermore, all evacuees in Toronto were given honorary memberships to the Toronto Public Library.¹⁹⁴

When the weather cooperated, evacuees were sent outdoors to play. Outdoor play gave evacuees a space for socialisation and enabled them to find their role within it. Outdoor play included sports like rugby, activities like roller skating, and adventuring in the natural landscape such as streams and ponds.¹⁹⁵ Some evacuees were given bicycles to enjoy. Neil Benton missed the fun as his foster mother forbade him from riding a bike even though she did not perceive any danger in permitting him to go swimming in the local creek.¹⁹⁶ The evacuees’ winter activities depended upon the climate as some parts of the country received less snow than others did. Snow and outdoor winter activities

¹⁸⁸ Anthony had 46 soldiers. IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

¹⁸⁹ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

¹⁹⁰ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁹¹ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

¹⁹² Ibid. Anthony is referring to the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of John.

¹⁹³ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

¹⁹⁴ “History of Children’s Services”, Toronto Public Library, accessed May 2, 2015.

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/about-the-library/library-history/history-of-childrens-services.jsp>

¹⁹⁵ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”. CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹⁹⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Neil Benton”.

became an important theme in many evacuees' letters as they found it was a way to conceptualise their new surroundings and the differences with home. Anthony Paish liked to tell his younger brother Chris about the snow and would note when he and his sister Elizabeth had been out playing and making tunnels in the snow banks.¹⁹⁷ Many evacuees took up skiing and skating. Because he was a "war guest" John Hughes was given a complementary season pass to the local skating rink.¹⁹⁸ Skating rinks acted as a public space where evacuees could interact with Canadians. When Elizabeth Paish went skating on one occasion in Ottawa, she even saw the Governor General.¹⁹⁹ Tobogganing was another a favourite winter pastime. This was an often unsupervised activity that allowed evacuees to create their own fun. Some evacuees' accounts of tobogganing expeditions are rather extreme. Patricia Cave wrote to her parents in 1941 that she had gone sledding with a number of friends on a hill that was very steep and had a river at the bottom. In what must have been a worrying letter for Patricia's parents to read, she noted that Colin had only narrowly missed going into the river.²⁰⁰ Tom Sharp wrote similar letters to his parents about his winter adventures including going down a big toboggan hill in High Park in Toronto after a man lent them a sled.²⁰¹

For some of the older evacuees, such activities may have seemed like "child's play". As the evacuees grew from children into "youth" over the five years that they lived in Canada, their social interests likely changed. These are largely absent from evacuee accounts. This is symptomatic of the records that exist but also the fact that youth do not always maintain personal records. Evacuees who arrived between the ages of six and ten authored the majority of existing collections of letters. There is less insight into the social lives of older evacuees, particularly if they began to write home less frequently as they grew older. This social time outside of school would have turned from play into courting

¹⁹⁷ IWM Documents, 3284, "Private Papers of Anthony Paish".

¹⁹⁸ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "John Hughes".

¹⁹⁹ IWM Documents, 3283, "Private Papers of Miss E M Paish". She wrote to her parents about it.

²⁰⁰ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

²⁰¹ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family".

and “hanging out”.²⁰² School dances became an important space for this development, especially for those evacuees who attended single-sex schools.²⁰³ Although romance may have caused tensions within foster families, such conflicts are wholly absent from evacuee wartime records, although this is often similarly absent from non-evacuee accounts of youth. Mary Hume provided a slight hint, in that her foster mother would not permit her to go to a friend’s Valentine’s Day party nor to a school dance unless escorted by the son of her foster parents’ friend.²⁰⁴ Overall, whether in terms of play or social “hang outs”, having unsupervised time and a space to act how they wanted allowed evacuees to develop a sense of identity and independence that had already been instilled in them through their separation from their families and Britain.

Evacuees also filled their time in Canada with various organised and often adult-supervised activities outside of school. Even if organised, an essence of play was embedded within the activities that meant children still had room to be creative. Many evacuees took a liking to music and used their time in Canada to develop those skills and their interest. Margaret Burt Hamilton became a pianist in an orchestra, despite initially having little piano training, and greatly enjoying practicing for events.²⁰⁵ Patricia Silver received music lessons to hone her skill and her foster mother reported this to her mother, writing in 1942, “she is plugging along steadily with school and music lessons and we feel quite satisfied at she is making as good progress with them all, as well or better than one could expect from a 6.5 year old”.²⁰⁶ For others, music and singing was an activity either within or outside the home. Sometimes foster parents, like that of Patricia and Colin Cave, wrote to the evacuees’ parents with small details of the children’s daily lives in order to convey the children’s happiness in their new surroundings. On September 15, 1940 for example, the Caves’ foster father Rob (an unusual occurrence for him to write) wrote:

²⁰² For more on the Canadian youth and courtship see Cynthia Comacchio, “In Love: Dating and Mating” in *The Dominion of Youth* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006): 69-98.

²⁰³ IWM, Documents, 1750, “Private Papers of Mrs S H Cooley”.

²⁰⁴ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Mary Richardson nee Hume”.

²⁰⁵ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Margaret Burt Hamilton”.

²⁰⁶ IWM Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”.

I hear the piano and two little voices singing ‘soloman heir’ and now ‘the Campbell’s are coming!’ I think if you could just drop in, you would feel fairly content, though I’m very sure there would be a big lump in each of your throats. ... Paddy just trotted in ‘we’re dancing’ and out she doffed again and now I hear Jesus loves me. The little beggars just love to get Marion to the piano and she adores it and them”.²⁰⁷

According to Neil Sutherland, music played a central role in the lives of many families.²⁰⁸ Music also became a space where evacuees could express themselves, develop skills and reflect satisfaction in doing so, yet it could also be a space where the children became a part of a community or group for therapeutic value. Making good use of their singing skills, many evacuees joined the Boy Scouts or Girl Guides during their time in Canada.²⁰⁹ This provided an alternative space for evacuees to interact with Canadian children. Lenora Williams from Byron House explained to the evacuees’ parents that “the elder boys have joined the Elmdale Cub pack and a Brownie pack has been formed and holds its weekly meeting at Byron House”. The importance of this, according to Williams, was that “both these activities are laying the foundation for cementing the bonds of lasting friendship within the Empire”.²¹⁰ In addition to mixing the evacuees with Canadian children, as both groups were rooted in British tradition established by Lord Baden-Powell, they would have been acceptable extra-curricular activities for the children.²¹¹ Evacuees could make friends and learn skills while still exercising British values, all while being under appropriate adult supervision. Elizabeth and Anthony Paish joined scout packs and routinely wrote to their parents about their experiences. At times these were about small activities, such as Elizabeth collecting orders for the Girl Guides’ donut drive.²¹² In other instances, they were involved in large

²⁰⁷ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

²⁰⁸ Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 172.

²⁰⁹ See Patricia Dirks, “Canada’s Boys—An Imperial or National Asset? Response to Baden-Powell’s Boy Scout Movement in Pre-War Canada”, in *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, ed. Philip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006): 111-128.

²¹⁰ IWM Documents, 1816, “Private Papers of Miss L M Williams”.

²¹¹ See Kristine Alexander, “Similarity and Difference at Girl Guide Camps in England, Canada and India” in *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century*, ed. Nelson Block and Tammy Proctor (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009): 106-120.

²¹² IWM, Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

events, such as when Elizabeth attended a rally for the Girl Guides in Ottawa in 1943 where they listened to Lady Baden-Powell's speech on the wireless.²¹³ In 1944, Anthony wrote that he went with his Cub pack to Britannia Park for a gathering of about fifty packs in Ottawa. There were races, tug of war, and peanut hunts and then the Governor General inspected all the packs, which comprised about a thousand boys.²¹⁴ Evacuees also participated in cadets, clubs, and philanthropic groups. Some contributed by fundraising, knitting socks, and attending events like a gymkhana while others like John Hughes even became the President of their school's Junior Red Cross.²¹⁵ Even as children, evacuees found opportunities to make their contributions to the war effort during their free time, particularly by fundraising. In their own way, this was an acceptable form of "war work".²¹⁶

Another activity in which evacuees partook was the cinema, where they were able to receive an education in Anglo-Canadian culture. The evacuees' status as war guests sometimes helped in this regard. As a special present, all the evacuees who had come with the English Electric group were given a free annual pass to the Lincoln Cinema.²¹⁷ Films were sometimes reserved as a special treat, such as for Patricia Cave's foster mother's birthday. Patricia wrote to her parents "went to a movie (cinema). It was called Fatasia [sic] pronounced Fant-ash-ee-a". Patricia wrote of another film that she went to see called "Virginia". The noteworthy part was when they saw an image of the Queen: "Elizabeth spoke not on the radio but in the picture she was thanking the knitters".²¹⁸ The cinema was not a space in which the children could escape from the war, as many films were war-themed. In 1941, Anthony Paish recorded to his parents that they went to see a film called "A Yank in the RAF" as he wrote that it was "about an American who went to England and joined the RAF. He had a lot of trouble with his girl friend [sic] and it had a

²¹³ IWM, Documents, 3284, "Private Papers of Anthony Paish".

²¹⁴ IWM Documents, 3283, "Private Papers of Miss E M Paish".

²¹⁵ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "John Hughes".

²¹⁶ This was much the case in Britain. See Berry Mayall and Virginia Morrow, *You Can Help Your Country: English Children's Work During the Second World War* (London: University of London, 2011).

²¹⁷ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Audrey Scholes nee Buxton".

²¹⁸ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

lot about the airforce”.²¹⁹ In 1943, Anthony explained to his parents that Elizabeth had gone with a friend from school to see a film called “Journey for Margaret” that was fittingly about two British refugees.²²⁰ While some evacuees were routinely allowed to attend films with friends in Canada, others like Sheila Westcott were prohibited. Although Sheila would visit the cinema in England before the war, when she moved to Montreal, her foster parents would not allow her to go to the cinema. This, however, was not because of fear of how the films would affect Sheila, but rather because there had previously been a big fire at the cinema and some children had perished. Only on Friday nights at her church was Sheila permitted to view films.²²¹

Like the cinema, the circus was a popular wartime escape for evacuees when it came to town. Animals were a source of excitement at the circus, a popular event for Canadian children.²²² In 1941, Anthony Paish shared his experience at the public spectacle with his parents writing that it “was a good circus for it had 3 elephants, about 10 tigers, 41 horses... the acrobats were very good too”. This enthusiasm did not fade as two years later Anthony returned to the circus and again wrote home about all the animals, performers, and tricks that were displayed including “one clown was sitting in a chair on the top of about five tables one above the other”.²²³ In 1944, nine-year-old Julie Kemp went to see the circus. Her participation in the activity evidently pleased her mother as she wrote, “it warms the heart to read that she is not too grown up”.²²⁴ Outside of the circus, some foster parents tried to ensure that evacuees explored nature. In September 1940, Patricia Cave wrote that they were taken to the zoo as she explained, “a donkey followed me because I petted it”.²²⁵ On another occasion, Patricia’s foster father Robert Simpson wrote her parents that they went on a ‘woodsny’ walk. He explained, “Colin

²¹⁹ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

²²⁰ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

²²¹ IWM, Documents, 1750, “Private Papers of Mrs S H Cooley”. This must have been in reference to the Laurier Palace Theatre Fire, 1927.

²²² See for instance, Peter Goheen, “Symbols in the Streets: Parades in Victorian Urban Canada”, *Urban History Review* 18 no. 3 (1990): 237-243.

²²³ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

²²⁴ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

²²⁵ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

sadly wanted me to catch him a squirrel – there are lots of them around! We saw a few...Colin's 'catch' however when he turned out his pockets at home was 42 acorns and one conker not so bad for little pockets".²²⁶

Evacuees also searched for part-time employment. In the planning of CORB, it was understood that the children would not be used as free labour; evacuees were to be guests rather than a source of help.²²⁷ Evacuees were not required or forced to work but some evacuees felt that there was an expectation in Canada that adolescents (particularly boys) should take on a part-time job to show initiative and to gain valuable life experience.²²⁸ Neil Sutherland in *Children in English-Canadian Society* argues that English-Canadians, since the nineteenth century, had placed importance on work. Work could make youth into "moral, hard-working, productive adults".²²⁹ The most popular part-time paid job for male evacuees was delivering newspapers. This started for Neil Benton when he was eleven.²³⁰ W. Gordon Jones similarly found himself a paper route and delivered the *Ottawa Journal* in his last year of high school. This was much to his parents' displeasure; according to Jones, "In England, anyone who delivered newspapers was looked down upon. It was a sign that your family was very poor. In Canada, you were looked up to if you delivered papers. It showed initiative, and was the stuff of which future prime ministers and business leaders were made". For the job, he needed a bicycle so he borrowed the money for a second-hand bike from another paperboy and paid him back after his first month of work. He also found a job as a delivery boy for a local drug store three nights a week in Westboro in Ottawa and then became the manager of the local outdoor skating rink. With three jobs that paid \$5 a week, Jones generated a significant purchasing power.²³¹ More seasonally, Alan William Maynard would go door-to-door

²²⁶ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

²²⁷ There was no direct reference in the planning however or rather, there was no concern. Canada understood that this was not a labour scheme but a "guest scheme".

²²⁸ This differed from earlier child migrant schemes that used children as labour, usually on farms.

²²⁹ Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2000), 11.

²³⁰ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Neil Benton".

²³¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "W. Gordon Jones". He found it hard apparently to understand this British mindset.

selling Christmas cards.²³² Some evacuees finished high school while in Canada, leading them to take on full-time employment. When W. Gordon Jones finished Grade 13 in 1944 at the age of sixteen, he found his first job at the Canadian National Railway working as a messenger boy in the freight yards at Ottawa's Union station. He made \$40 a month.²³³

Some evacuees like Neil Benton were assigned "work" or household chores in their Canadian homes to teach a sense of responsibility and help the household function.²³⁴ Neil Sutherland in *Growing Up* argues that girls in Canada were traditionally required to fulfill tasks like washing dishes, food preparation, and household tidying. That some evacuees completed these tasks in home would not have been beyond the national trend and familial expectations of the time. Patricia Cave wrote home about her housework on April 8, 1941 explaining "I made 3 beds dusted the stairs did the library did 2 bedrooms helped make lunch. After lunch I cleared the table with Colin".²³⁵ In 1942, when the family "maid" was ill, Patricia Cave decided to help by vacuum the house "having a lot of fun".²³⁶ Equally, Canadian boys were expected to complete tasks like collecting fuel for the stove or furnace, jobs in which evacuees also took part. Les Oliver was responsible for chopping wood and carrying it in the house and filling up kerosene lamps and trimming the wicks.²³⁷ David Simister had to pick berries and apples and weed the garden whilst Peter Horlock who lived on a farm, had small tasks like mucking out animal stalls and collecting eggs.²³⁸ Another outdoor nature activity in which many evacuees participated was gardening, a recreational activity that carried a larger purpose. Gardening and growing their own produce in a victory garden allowed evacuees to participate in the broader community while contributing to the war effort. On May 18,

²³² IWM, Interview, 5260, Alan Maynard, 1981.

²³³ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "W. Gordon Jones".

²³⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Neil Benton".

²³⁵ IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

²³⁶ Neil Sutherland argues that girls in Canada were traditionally required to fulfill tasks like the dishes, gardening, and household chores. That some evacuees completed these tasks in home would not have been beyond the national trend and familial expectations of the time. Boys were expected to complete tasks like collecting fuel for the stove or furnace, which evacuees also remember. Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 19. IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

²³⁷ Author's Evacuee Database, "Les Oliver".

²³⁸ Author's Evacuee Database, "Roger Harris" and "Peter Horlock".

1942 Tom Sharp wrote to tell his parents that he had been given a small garden of his own in which he “planted 3 or 4 corn seeds, 3 or 4 pea seeds, lettuce, beets and I planted a small mixed assortment of flowers”. “Everything is coming up now fine” he later reported.²³⁹ Over the years, Tom became quite proud of his garden, writing often to his parents about its progress and his honed skills. All such activities, either unorganised or organised, shaped evacuees’ daily lives and exposed them to a Canadian way of life.

For those not finished education, the summer holiday was another opportunity to take up temporary employment in the community. Such work allowed evacuees to contribute to the war effort while making some extra money. In May 1943, Karl Bernhardt made another broadcast as part of his *Youth on Parade* series and talked about boys and girls going out to work on farms in the summer. To garner support from parents, Bernhardt argued that it could be a “valuable experience for them as well as a great service to our country and war effort” and that parents should “give them every chance and encouragement to meet their problems for themselves to adjust to their jobs”. This would be an opportunity for the youth as “it should help to produce essential food and at the same time provide a training in both hard work and self-discipline that will be invaluable to the boy or girl...the same can be said for other kinds of work”.²⁴⁰ Alan Maynard was one such boy who went to a farm camp for his summer holidays. He would send updates to his parents, reporting one year that they were “getting to the end of picking of potatoes and [were] picking beans and threshing”.²⁴¹ Arthur Thomas in 1941 got a job picking Colorado beets off the potato field at the rate of 10 cents an hour and then went to a farm and painted a farmhouse.²⁴² Whether temporary or full-time, employment made evacuees into productive, contributing members of society.

Summer holidays became a lasting memory for many evacuees and provided time to socialise with their Canadian peers and explore the natural environment around them. Audrey Buxton spent every day of the summer holiday at the St. Catharines Playground

²³⁹ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

²⁴⁰ UOTA, MS Coll 368, Karl Bernhardt Fonds.

²⁴¹ IWM, Interview, 5260, Alan Maynard, 1981.

²⁴² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Richard Thomas”.

scheme where the children were entertained with games and activities.²⁴³ Summer was a time to spend with new Canadian friends. Josephine Robson had the opportunity to go into the mountains to Lac Raymond to help at a children's summer camp.²⁴⁴ Some evacuees had the privilege of going to summer camp themselves, a longstanding tradition for many Canadian youth. This tradition was foreign to Sheila Westcott who had to have it explained to her when she found the custom of children going away for two months rather strange. Sheila Westcott sailed the Saguenay River on a large yacht with her foster family in the summer of 1942 and went to camp for four weeks in 1942, and nine weeks in 1943.²⁴⁵ Some evacuees who had arrived in July 1940 had been sent directly to camp before the start of school. Veronica Owens went to Camp Occuto on Georgian Bay in Midland, Ontario, and wrote her parents that the camp was "on a lake, and sailing, bathing, canoeing, and all that sort of thing happens. I don't know much about it but a lot of Canadian girls go everyone enjoys them".²⁴⁶ Evacuees had to learn from Canadian children, yet with the knowledge that they were in the midst of war guests, Canadian children were often equally intrigued by evacuees. When three evacuee boys went to YMCA camp in Toronto, Canadian boys wanted to know everything about the bombings, the bombers, the war in England, and their journey to Canada and quizzed the boys long past "lights out".²⁴⁷

Patricia Cave also ventured north of Toronto to Pioneer camp on Lake Clearwater, a popular camp for many Toronto children who attended private schools. Tom Sharp also went to Pioneer camp; for him, camp became an opportunity to become more independent. Through his letters, his growing self-pride and self-confidence is apparent. While at camp, Tom found it very important to know how to swim, something he first found to be "difficult".²⁴⁸ Over two summers, he proudly tracked his progress: "I'm glad

²⁴³ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Audrey Scholes nee Buxton".

²⁴⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Josephine Mence nee Robson".

²⁴⁵ IWM Documents, 1750, "Private Papers of Mrs S H Cooley".

²⁴⁶ IWM Documents, 134, "Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens".

²⁴⁷ "Visitors from England Keep "Y" Camp Awake with Interesting Tales" *Toronto Telegram*, September 24, 1940.

²⁴⁸ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family".

to say I can swim about 13 feet” and set himself the goal of “swim[ming] 25 feet by the end of the summer,” which he did achieve. Tom also proudly noted that at camp he was old enough to sleep in a tent (previously he slept in a cabin) and that when their leader had gone away, they were able to sleep in the tent alone.²⁴⁹ Although he arrived from England as a shy, nervous child, in his letters Tom constructed a sense of himself in which he emphasised his maturity, responsibility, and independence. Anthony Paish similarly wrote letters about his experience at a YMCA camp that included going with a fellow evacuee, Duncan Ferguson. While at camp in July 1942, Anthony wrote to his parents about all of his new experiences such as canoe trips, woodworking, and nature lore.²⁵⁰ Yet camp was no escape from the war; on July 20, 1945, Anthony wrote, “last night was commando night” and “there were 6 objectives which we had to capture the radio station, Gestapo HQ. You are killed by having your armband ripped off”. He proceeded to provide a military-style brief of the attack: “At 8:00 all commandos were in the intermediate section...8:20 all regular attacked on right. 8:45 those on left attacked radio station. I was killed at about 9:15”. In stark juxtaposition, Anthony closed his letter with a simple wish that his family were having a nice summer despite their proximity to the war.

Summer holidays became an opportunity for Canadians who were not foster parents to offer to care for evacuees. Providing evacuees with a memorable summer holiday became another contribution to the war guest cause. Marjorie Bateson spent all her summers at Otty Lake, near Perth, at the initiative of Miss Smith, a teacher at a local school who took Marjorie under her wing.²⁵¹ During Anthony and Elizabeth Paish’s first summer in Canada, they were taken for tea by “a lady”, Mrs. Brownley, who then took them to visit another friend with a house on a lake.²⁵² The following summer, Anthony and Elizabeth were invited to stay for a week with a Mrs. Gemmel in Arnprior, near

²⁴⁹ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

²⁵⁰ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

²⁵¹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Marjorie Coates nee Bateson”.

²⁵² IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

Ottawa.²⁵³ Their days consisted of reading and playing. Rather than summer camp, some evacuees experienced a Canadian summer at the cottage as a “family holiday” that replaced the British seaside tradition. These long holidays must have seemed like another world to the evacuees’ parents in Britain. Julie Kemp’s mother caught the sentiment as she wrote to Julie’s foster mother on May 31, 1942, “we can’t spend over here and holidays are taboo - every station is placarded ‘is your journey really necessary? Domestic petrol comes to an end this month and the buses implore us not to go on them’”.²⁵⁴ John Macnab spent each summer in Laclu at his foster family’s cottage on the lake. He was given not just his own room, but also the experience of “open space, freedom, clean air, open water, boats, and fresh fish for supper contrasted greatly to his home in Glasgow”.²⁵⁵ For evacuees, staying at the cottage afforded time to enjoy their new surroundings. In August 1942, Patricia Cave wrote to her parents that she was up at Lake Simcoe “having quite a decent time, swimming, tennis, walking, sleeping, eating and reading”. All seemed idyllic until Patricia mentioned in that there had been a total eclipse the night before and while they were watching it they heard news that the Duke of Kent had died in an air crash. Patricia wrote, “Was it a shock! I am just recovering”. Yet this news was quickly followed by Patricia’s explanation that they were having ‘corn on the cob’ for dinner, a Canadian delicacy she never took to liking. After a “GAP FOR SUPPER” in her letter, she continued writing that “the corn was not too bad. But I am now F.R.U.T.B. meaning full right up to bursting”.²⁵⁶ There was certainly no shortage of food in Canada. Anthony Paish while at a cottage on July 6, 1941 wrote to his parents to commemorate the fact that they had been in Canada a whole year and added that he hoped they would soon be back in England.²⁵⁷ A few weeks later on July 27, 1941, Anthony wrote from Perkins, Quebec, and depicted the carefree days recording that he had “collected 3 boxes of fur cones today to burn in the autumn” and that “we jump into

²⁵³ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

²⁵⁴ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

²⁵⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Macnab”.

²⁵⁶ IWM, Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

²⁵⁷ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

the water off the raft”.²⁵⁸ These long summers of enjoyment at the cottage and lake greatly contrasted the wartime experiences of their peers back in Britain.

These different experiences in public spaces led the evacuees to form their own conceptions of Canada, particularly the cultural and natural landscapes of the country, and contributed to evacuees’ cultural education. Evacuees also used comparisons to Britain as a mechanism through which to comprehend Canada’s cultural landscape. Evacuees felt the need to explain to their parents the differences in currency. Alan Maynard told his parents that he was making \$13.48 working for the Farm Service Camp, and that “this is in our money or your money whatever you prefer to call it nearly 3 pound”.²⁵⁹ Alan also reflected his confusion of what currency he should identify with. Similarly, evacuees made sense of their new homes by discussing the differences in the cultural landscape of vocabulary. Veronica Owens argued, “Canadians call some things quite different” as she listed “wireless = radio, cinema = movies, biscuits = cookies, public school = private school, secondary and council school = public schools, trams = streetcars, garden = backyard. They are trying to teach us [evacuees] to say OK properly because we mustn’t say it unless with the right accent as it doesn’t mean much.”²⁶⁰ Veronica clearly felt a need to conform and her use of “equals” signs suggested that she found these words synonymous. Elizabeth Paish used a similar approach in her letter on October 18, 1941 as she simply recorded a list of Canadian words for her parents which included: “candy= sweet, gasoline =petrol, sidewalk= pavement, truck= lorry or van, cookies =biscuits, hot dogs = a sort of bun with sausage”.²⁶¹ These are suggestive of things that Elizabeth had come across frequently, namely transportation and food. Even as an eight year old, Patricia Cave was quite perceptive to point towards a linguistic difference in Canada when she noted in September 1940 “I have got a very small but very “cute” mouth organ, it has the scale only you have to blow in and then out and that gives

²⁵⁸ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

²⁵⁹ IWM Documents, 9928, “Canadian Evacuee’s Instructions, 1940.”

²⁶⁰ IWM Documents, 134, “Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens.”

²⁶¹ IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

you do+ ray. I like it". Yet her perceptions of the Canadian cultural landscape did not end there. In 1941, Patricia was also able to comment on her perception of the Empire as she wrote home "In ENGLAND we have gears on the floor in the car but in Canada the most of them are attached to the steering wheel. I think it is very funny but the Canadians do not they say that England still keeps the old way. I think so to [sic] because of all the new things in Canada".²⁶² The evacuees' experiences in Canada shaped their conceptions of the natural, physical, and cultural landscape in Canada. These conceptions were formed throughout the war, yet would endure long past the war's end.

Evacuees experienced and engaged with the Canadian natural landscape differently depending on where they lived. An evacuee living on a farm in Saskatchewan would have experienced and interacted with the landscape differently, compared to one living in downtown Toronto. This also rang true for how evacuees experienced Canada's physical landscape. Although intertwined, the physical landscape included the unnatural, constructed landscape, particularly in urban areas. Exploring their new environments was important for evacuees and some were fortunate to view it in new ways. Traversing these landscapes also became part of evacuees' cultural education. Tom Sharp was able to see all over Toronto when he went to "Uncle John's" office and got a special view.²⁶³ Many evacuees made sense of their physical environment by comparing it to their homes in Britain. Gordon Hope wrote to his parents not long after his arrival, "All the tramcars out here are single deckers but far longer than ours at home. The buses too are single decker but are flat at the front and streamlined in the back. The motor cars are nearly all big posh affairs".²⁶⁴ Thirteen-year-old Bill Sharp illustrates this trend as he shared his perceptions of his new environment. Bill's first letter home records his initial observations of downtown Toronto:

It has many fine buildings, etc. is well laid out but it lacks something which English towns possess. It is difficult to describe what this something is; perhaps it is something to do with the lack of any definite plan. We talk of

²⁶² IWM, Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

²⁶³ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family".

²⁶⁴ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Gordon and David Hope".

how badly designed our towns are but they are much better than this. True the place is all laid out on regular blocks but the buildings are all higgly-piggly.

Bill's hand-drawn map illustrates his perceptions of a typical Toronto intersection and labels roads as "important" and "unimportant", but he never explains his definitions.²⁶⁵ Although Bill set out to describe his changing physical space, he claims authority to criticise and evaluate his new surroundings against his old surroundings, much like a travel writer.

Canada's natural landscape was certainly different from that of Britain. Although the children were told about Canada's natural landscape before they left Britain, their arrival at Canadian ports was their first proper experience of it. To make sense of their move, as the children travelled across Canada to their new homes they remarked on the country's landscape. Watching the new sights go by provided entertainment and a distraction for the long journey, but also signified the vastness of the country to evacuees. These sights etched into the children's minds and many still recall those first glimpses of Canada whether it was icebergs or forests.²⁶⁶ Gordon Hope described his train journey to Sarnia, Ontario, writing, "all we saw was green fields and orchards".²⁶⁷ Throughout the war, the places the evacuees visited continued to shape their conceptualisation of Canada's natural landscape. Evacuees continued to share these concepts with their parents. Veronica Owens recorded, "Georgian Bay really is a glorious place there are 3000 islands and it is pretty. This island is noted as being the nicest round here and we all certainly agree".²⁶⁸ Many evacuees were taken to see Niagara Falls. On September 4, 1941, Jean Ingham wrote to her parents that she had gone on the *Maid of the Mist* and saw rapids and a whirlpool.²⁶⁹ Other day trips and excursions allowed the evacuees to experience the Canadian landscape. On April 7, 1941 for instance, Anthony Paish wrote to his parents that he had been "to a 'sugar bush' to see the maple sirup [sic] being made" and a few days later had gone to "watch the river which was very high and had waves as big as the

²⁶⁵ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family".

²⁶⁶ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Margaret Burt Hamilton".

²⁶⁷ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, "Gordon and David Hope".

²⁶⁸ IWM, Documents, 134, "Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens".

²⁶⁹ IWM Documents, 15368, "Private Papers of Miss J Ingham".

sea”.²⁷⁰ Tom Sharp pointed out a unique natural landscape in the autumn of 1941 and he wrote on October 19, “the trees are covered with coloured leaves”.²⁷¹ Throughout the war, evacuees traversed this natural landscape, which ranged from forests, to water, to prairies, to mountains. The result was a deep and lasting impression for many evacuees. In August 1945, Bill Walker in Moncton, New Brunswick, expressed his views of the contrasts between Britain and Canada in a record he made and sent to his parents. Despite the similar language, he noted, “the two countries are vastly different” in “the vastness of the country itself, which cannot be appreciated until one had traveled extensively in it”. He claimed, “you will not be able to strike a comparison, but only a contrast, to your own land”.²⁷² Interestingly, Bill then continued on “I say your land and not mine, because I do not now feel so much a part of it”. After five years in Canada, Bill had fallen in love with Canada. He explained “Always, though, I shall remember the beautiful English countryside...the roar of the city...the beauty of Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London, the museums, and of course Selfridges... I have found here another call, which I know you will enjoy as much as those: the smell of spruce woods in the heat of the summer day; the sweeping beauty of nature’s forests stretching away to the horizon; the fiery splendor of the aurora borealis; and the quiet stillness of trees laden with snow”. For Bill, Canada’s great landscape was vastly different from Britain but provided something that Britain could not.

Upon arrival in Canada, British child evacuees became known across the country as Canada’s war guests. The choice of the term was not accidental; it reflected that Canada had claimed these children as her own for the duration of the war. Their imposed title changed from being British to belonging to Canada. They consequently became small celebrities as newspaper, radio, and even film captured their story for Canadian audiences. In exchange, their war guest status meant that they were utilised as symbols of the war and British stoicism. As a result, they were public recipients of special treatment and Canadian philanthropy. The evacuees’ imposed identity and their conspicuousness

²⁷⁰ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

²⁷¹ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

²⁷² CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, “Rob and William Walker”.

made them stand out in spaces such as school, church, and in play where they interacted with Canadian children. The new experiences evacuees faced of holidays, activities, and part-time work illustrate that although not unfamiliar, Canada had different cultural traditions from Britain. Similarly, the cultural, physical, and natural Canadian landscape became a significant backdrop to evacuees' lives; it shaped their daily experiences, but also provided the greatest contrast to life in Britain. Over the years, evacuees were still conscious of the war, yet many settled down into their daily routines in Canada. They had received however, a "cultural education," something that became a significant part of their childhoods and would remain with them for the rest of their lives.

Chapter Five

A New Battle Begins: Return, Reintegration, and Reconstruction

On July 5, 1945 the *Toronto Daily Star* reported “War Guest Children Now Britain Bound”, claiming that evacuees were:

headed for homes in a Britain that many of them scarcely remember...most of them openly admitted they hated to leave Canada, and some of the older teenagers said they were definitely coming back to Canada...some were a little worried about how they would get along in Britain, with its customs now strange to them.¹

By the time victory in Europe was declared on May 8, 1945, the vast majority of evacuees had spent between four and five years in Canada. For evacuees who had arrived at the age of five, their time in Canada equated to half of their childhood. Evacuees’ daily lives in the private and public space exposed them to new experiences, new places, and a different way of life, ultimately providing them with a cultural education. As they returned to Britain they brought their new cultural education with them, something which became problematic. The historiography of evacuation in Canada has tended to focus more on the evacuees’ arrival in the summer of 1940 than on their departure.² The database reveals when and why evacuees left Canada, an important recognition that the duration of evacuation varied with each child. In addition to tracing the evacuees’ departure from Canada, this chapter illustrates the complexity of their attempts to reintegrate into life in Britain in the immediate postwar period. Taking a long view, this chapter also considers the lasting emotional, practical, and familial consequences of evacuation. The evacuation experience led some evacuees to immigrate to Canada. This begins to explain why the legacy of Canadian overseas evacuation differs from that of domestic evacuation. Overall, Canada was a successful host and caretaker of Britain’s children. Evacuees who returned to Canada after the war did so because they had grown fond of the nation and it offered *something* that postwar Britain simply could not.

¹ “War Guest Children Now Britain Bound” *Toronto Daily Star*, July 5, 1945.

² This is because it is much more difficult to trace evacuees’ departures.

Through individual evacuees, their families, and their Canadian foster families, the Imperial ties or bonds between Britain and Canada were strengthened. Evacuation was supposed to be a wartime measure to save Britain's children from war, but it became a deeply personal experience that shaped evacuees' childhoods and ultimately their lives. That many evacuees had become attached to their surrogate nation and foster families meant that arguments for overseas evacuation in 1940, anticipating that it would provide a cultural education for the evacuees and also an exercise in Empire building, had come to fruition.

From the outset, the British and Canadian governments agreed that evacuation would be temporary. It was not an adoption scheme, nor was it an immigration scheme for pauper children to be used as child labour in Canada. Evacuees, at the end of the war, were to be returned to their parents. Historians have recognised that evacuees returned to Britain but have struggled to analyse the repatriation process. Except for 253 children who arrived in 1939, over 2,800 evacuees arrived in Canada in the summer months of 1940. Many evacuees had traveled together in a total of forty-nine ships crossing the Atlantic in the summer of 1940.³ The database reveals that although evacuees arrived within a short period of time, they would not return to Britain in a similar fashion. Rather, evacuees trickled back to Britain at various times and for various reasons. All CORB evacuees were guaranteed a return passage to Britain for no charge. In a speech in October 1941 Geoffrey Shakespeare had reminded Canadian authorities that "the United Kingdom was under an obligation to repatriate all our children in Canada to the United Kingdom and that being children and having the opportunity of a free voyage most of them would wish to come back".⁴ As a way to conceptualise when and why evacuees returned to Britain, their departures from Canada can be organised into four categories: prior to VE Day, at the end of the war, after the end of the war, and those who never

³ Author's Evacuee Database. LAC, RG 26, Immigration Branch, "Vol 16: Statistical Tabulations".

⁴ TNA, DO 131/32, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Report by Sir G Shakespeare on his visit to Canada".

returned at all. The first CORB evacuees left as early as 1942.⁵ By 1942 evacuees who had arrived at the age of fifteen, the oldest age permitted to leave Britain, had turned seventeen years old. With parents' permission, evacuees could be repatriated when they turned seventeen. Five CORB evacuees left in 1942, making their evacuation to Canada only two years in length, the shortest duration of all evacuees. David Cook was the first evacuee to leave, returning to Chelmsford, Essex on July 28, 1942. Cook had seemingly been living happily in Toronto and had not moved from his first placement with Mr. Maurice Grimby, a nominated host.⁶ With no evidence of any emotional strain and old enough to relinquish his evacuee protection, it is likely that he took advantage of the opportunity to return home and/or wanted to make a contribution to the British war effort.

Francis Williamson in Saskatoon turned seventeen in 1942 and wanted to become actively involved in the war. In June 1942 he enlisted in the 2nd Battalion, Saskatoon Light Infantry as a bugle boy in the Reserves. This was unsatisfactory for Francis, however, and he grew anxious to return to Britain. He had even "written to a naval recruiting officer at Middlesbrough" where he was from. Francis returned home on November 18, 1942 and became free to seek opportunities. Providing a unique insight into how evacuee parents perceived their children upon return, Francis' father reported to CORB that "the boy's physical improvement was 'startling' [as] he has grown and become much broader and put on weight". Even with his son's desire to return early, Francis' father claimed that his son's evacuation had "broadened his outlook on life".⁷ Although he did not initially leave Canada, James Calvert from Tynemouth surrendered his evacuee status in December 1942 when he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force. James had waited anxiously until he turned eighteen to enlist.⁸ *The National Service (Armed Forces) Act, 1939* passed by the British Parliament on the day Britain declared war on Germany made male British subjects available for conscription at the age of

⁵ This is much harder to trace for private evacuees unless one was to check each individuals' return passenger list.

⁶ Author's Evacuee Database, David Cook.

⁷ Author's Evacuee Database, Francis Williamson.

⁸ Author's Evacuee Database, James Calvert. His case file originally gave his birthdate as 26/11/1927 but then it was crossed out and replaced with 21/2/1925. TNA, DO 131/107, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "1940 Canada".

eighteen.⁹ However, there is no evidence to suggest that the same rules applied to evacuees in Canada, nor that evacuees would be “recalled” to Britain or required to join the Canadian Forces. James left his younger brother Kenneth in Regina, Saskatchewan, and subsequently received his wings and commission.¹⁰ With his CORB ID number 45, James had been one of the first fifty evacuees accepted and registered in the whole CORB scheme and one of the first evacuees to arrive in Canada.

Enlistment was not the only reason evacuees returned home; the other two evacuees to leave Canada in 1942 did so because of apparent issues in acclimatising to life in Canada. Gordon Yelf and his sister Sheila had gone to live with their uncle in London, Ontario. Although Sheila remained in the home for the duration of the war, Gordon changed foster homes; the reason for the change was simply listed as “difficult environment”. His subsequent foster mother then moved to New Brunswick, leaving Gordon to stay with friends and then later attend a beach camp. In 1942, at the age of seventeen, Gordon returned home to Newcastle, leaving his sister, who did not return until December 1944.¹¹ Another way to observe emotional issues experienced by evacuees is to survey the reasons why evacuees returned home early. Gordon’s case file lists the reason for his departure, recording “Uncle ‘rigid’ and did not give boy pocket money” and that “this appears to be a serious case of maladjustment”. The file further notes that “money appears to have been missed and Gordon suspected. Mr. Cristall [of the Children’s Aid Society, London] considers this to be ‘not characteristic but rather an indication of his mal-adjustment’”.¹² Rather than casting Gordon as a delinquent, the report attributed his poor behaviour to the difficulties of settling into his new life rather than any malicious intent. As Gordon had turned seventeen, and with the permission of his parents, he was permitted to return to Britain. In an unusual circumstance, David

⁹ Under *The Military Training Act of 27 April 1939*, all fit and able British men aged twenty and twenty-one who were were required to take six months' military training. At the outbreak of war, Britain's numbers were low so another Act was passed. The National Service (Armed Forces) Act made all able-bodied men between eighteen and forty-one liable for conscription.

¹⁰ Author's Evacuee Database, James Calvert.

¹¹ Author's Evacuee Database, Gordon Yelf.

¹² Ibid. Not all CORB case files list the reasons for evacuees' return however. Gordon's case file includes the note: “see file 2 on maladjustment” but this has been lost or destroyed.

Furnish also left for Britain in August 1942, but without the permission of any authority. By 1942, David had been placed in four foster homes after first being placed in a nominated home. An example of an unsuccessful nominated placement, David was also seventeen years old in 1942, which likely contributed to his departure. His case file explains that, according to his parents, he “would have stayed at school until 16 and entered naval college”. However, on July 27, 1942 David ran away from his foster home and “worked his way home” to Britain.¹³ While five evacuees ceased to be under the care of CORB by 1942, no female evacuees are recorded as departing from Canada, despite some also turning seventeen years old. Even if small in number, evacuees who had been in Canada were the first CORB evacuees out of all the Dominions to return to Britain. The fall of Singapore in February 1942 voided the possibility of evacuees leaving New Zealand and Australia for home. Even by May 1945 only fifty-two out of the 779 evacuees in those two Dominions had returned to Britain.¹⁴ In 1942, a propaganda campaign in Britain imploring parents to tell their children to “stay put” in their evacuated areas.¹⁵

While very few evacuees left Canada in 1942, the number slowly increased from 1943 to early 1945. Although victory was still in the distance, forty-nine evacuees embarked once again on dangerous seas to return to Britain in 1943. An additional 238 left in 1944.¹⁶ Those who left after 1942 but prior to VE Day did so for similar reasons as those in 1942: at the request of their parents, to enlist, or because of emotional strain. By 1943, evacuees who had arrived in Canada at the age of fourteen or fifteen were now seventeen and eighteen years old, ages deemed acceptable to return or enlist. To transport evacuees, CORB utilised the “White Ensign Scheme” under which commanding officers

¹³ Author’s Evacuee Database, David Furnish. David’s first home was nominated yet there was no reason listed for his move. Subsequent moves were because of a “lack of suitable sleeping accommodations” and “to be with younger people”.

¹⁴ TNA, DO 131/27, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Statistics of Children Leaving the UK”.

¹⁵ Starns, *Oceans Apart*, 134.

¹⁶ Author’s Evacuee Database.

in the Royal Navy were permitted to transport pre-selected civilians back to Britain.¹⁷ Ensuring that parental authority was respected, parents had to grant permission for the evacuee to return home.¹⁸ This also meant that parents could “recall” their children. With their permission, Lilian and Joseph Carr returned to their parents in 1943, even though Lilian was only sixteen and Joseph, fourteen.¹⁹ Rather than wait for CORB to arrange transportation, the parents of Denis Korn were so anxious to see their son again that they withdrew him from CORB and made their own arrangements, at their own expense.²⁰ Joan Frank’s parents wrote to her foster parents to discuss her future wherein “some misunderstanding ha[d] arisen between parents and foster parents”. The rift was seemingly so significant that Joan’s parents decided to bring her home; Joan left Canada in September 1943.²¹ In an unusual case, disagreement between Dorothy Scarre and her parents resulted after they requested her return in January 1943, when she turned nineteen. Dorothy’s case file suggested that she had changed her mind with the note “does not now wish to return”. Dorothy’s wishes seemed to take precedence, as her file further recorded “No steps being taken for return passage”, yet she did indeed return home in March 1943.²² Others such as Peter Borthwick simply returned due to their age.²³ Female evacuees such as Elise Elliot, Audrey Bardell, Wylda, Madge Harris, and Isobel Robertson also returned because they had turned either seventeen or eighteen.²⁴ Some parents requested or granted permission for one of their children to return, even if it meant that their other child(ren) would remain in Canada. Mildred Hall and Kathleen

¹⁷ See Stephen Roskill, *White Ensign: The British Navy at War, 1939-1945* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1960).

¹⁸ TNA, DO 131/35, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Settlement Overseas of CORB Children”. CORB evacuees could not return without their parents’ consent.

¹⁹ Author’s Evacuee Database, Joseph Carr and Lilian Carr.

²⁰ Author’s Evacuee Database, Denis Korn.

²¹ Author’s Evacuee Database, Joan Frank.

²² Author’s Evacuee Database, Dorothy Scarre.

²³ Author’s Evacuee Database. Peter Borthwick, George Anderson, and Gordon Taylor. John Bentley left in 1943; an unhappy placement did not seem to factor into their return as they all only lived with one foster family respectively.

²⁴ Author’s Evacuee Database, Elise Elliot, Audrey Bardell, Wylda Madge Harris, and Isobel Robertson. All of the girls who left in 1943 were almost all seventeen or eighteen years old, so age was a large motivating factor for many moves.

Oakley both left behind younger brothers.²⁵ In 1944, eighteen-year-old Agnes Scott left in April, leaving behind her sisters Edwina, thirteen, and Janet, fourteen.²⁶ For evacuees who had been living with a sibling, their return would be another separation to endure.

Both male and female evacuees left Canada before the end of the war to enlist or take up war work. In June 1943 the *Globe and Mail*, on the advice of the United Kingdom High Commissioner, reported that evacuees should join up once they reach military age in Britain, eighteen for boys and nineteen for girls.²⁷ Such encouragement was unnecessary for evacuees who were anxious to return to do their bit. Norman Condry wanted to return to Britain to take an apprenticeship, as he had been taking a course in marine engineering.²⁸ In February 1944 Lewis Cree, whose father had died in 1940, was “anxious to return to UK to join Royal Navy”.²⁹ According to his case file, John Bellerby was “anxious to become a machinist” and therefore “gained parents’ consent to return” when he turned eighteen.³⁰ As listed in his case file, John Webber returned to Britain in December 1943 and was interested in aeroplane construction.³¹ Some evacuees had left school and found jobs that contributed to the war effort. James Kearney had become self-supporting at sixteen by working at McDonald’s Aircraft Co. in Manitoba and therefore returned to Britain as an aircraft apprentice.³² Eric Yare shared the same idea as he returned aged seventeen from Sarnia, Ontario, in 1943 to take up an RAF aircraft apprenticeship.³³ Sometimes evacuees’ placements had an impact on their decisions. Teddie Davy stayed with the Reverend Walter Dunlop, an RCAF chaplain in Halifax, an experience which might have influenced Teddie’s return as, according to his case file, he

²⁵ Author’s Evacuee Database, Mildred Hall was living with an aunt in Winnipeg and Kathleen Oakley, aunt in Sannich, BC. Mildred left her brother Donald who was five years her junior and Kathleen her brother Philip who was eight years younger.

²⁶ Author’s Evacuee Database, Agnes Scott, Edwina knight, Janet Knight.

²⁷ “Draft Effects British Youth”, *Globe and Mail*, June 4, 1943.

²⁸ Author’s Evacuee Database, Norman Condry. Norman had two foster homes; the first was nominated but he had to be moved when “hosts could not meet expenses”.

²⁹ Author’s Evacuee Database, Lewis Cree.

³⁰ Author’s Evacuee Database, John Bellerby. He turned 18 in 1943.

³¹ Author’s Evacuee Database, John Webber.

³² Author’s Evacuee Database, James Kearney.

³³ Author’s Evacuee Database, Eric Yare.

expressed some interest in the air force.³⁴ Albert Hayes, who was living in a nominated home in Hillcrest, Alberta, had so wanted to pursue a “sea career” that he had, according to his case file, “made enquiries about Dartmouth HMS Conway”.³⁵ Losing her father in May 1942, when Lilian Sims turned 18 she decided to return and started a technical course under the Ministry of Supply. Ethel Seale finished a business course at college and, upon turning eighteen, returned to Britain to join one of the services.³⁶

While some evacuees returned to Britain with the intent of joining up, sixty-four other evacuees were actively serving in Dominion Forces by May 25, 1945.³⁷ Others joined the British services. These included Henry Bristow who had managed to join the Royal Air Force, William Mill who had joined the Merchant Navy, Harold Robson who had joined the Naval Cadets, and five boys who had joined the Royal Navy.³⁸ The majority of evacuees joined the Royal Air Force.³⁹ Albert Moorhouse gained his parents’ permission to return to England, intending to join the Royal Navy. Upon return Albert enlisted, but was discharged “with defective vision” and subsequently took up employment as an audit clerk.⁴⁰ If they enlisted in the British forces, evacuees would make use of CORB’s free passage back to Britain. This enabled evacuees to reconnect with their families before enlisting. Some parents implored their children to take this option. Evacuees and their families may have feared that if they joined the Canadian services their discharge after the war might be complicated. A memorandum from the Department of Mines and Resources in 1943 made it clear to CORB that any evacuee who enlisted with the

³⁴ Author’s Evacuee Database, Teddie Davy. Teddy’s Mother gave permission for him to return so he worked his way back to Britain.

³⁵ Author’s Evacuee Database, Albert Hayes. His parents however, refused to give consent for Albert to enlist in the Royal Navy.

³⁶ Author’s Evacuee Database, Ethel Seale, Lilian Sims.

³⁷ TNA, DO 131/27, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Statistics of Children Leaving the UK”.

³⁸ Author’s Evacuee Database, Henry Bristow, William Mill, Harold Robson. For example, George Mallaby and Frank Reid joined the Royal Navy and we also some of the first CORB evacuees as symbolised by their low COBR numbers.

³⁹ Author’s Evacuee Database, Anthony Shine, Edgar Nash, Peter Cave. It is difficult to establish how many were actually accepted. No former evacuees appear on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission casualty database.

⁴⁰ Author’s Evacuee Database, Albert Moorhouse. His issue with good vision surely should have been noticed as he was fitted with glasses in Canada in 1942.

Canadian forces was entitled to return to Canada to be discharged. The Canadian government went further and decided that all evacuees who joined the Canadian forces would be entitled to return to Britain. This honoured, and in fact extended, CORB's commitment to transport evacuees back to Britain. The memorandum made it clear that evacuees enlisting in Canada "would not in any way affect their right of repatriation to their own country shortly after the war".⁴¹ That the government even specifically outlined such policy shows that evacuees were still given special attention.

Evacuees enlisted in the Canadian forces. Sixteen boys, such as Brian Booth, joined the Canadian Army. This number was supplemented by Edwyn Johnson who joined a Canadian Army university course.⁴² Twelve evacuees enlisted in the Royal Canadian Navy whilst three enlisted as RCN reserves.⁴³ Joining the Royal Canadian Air Force was the most popular choice for evacuees. Seventeen enlisted in the RCAF, whilst another evacuee, Geoffrey Hogwood, was simply recorded as joining the Canadian forces.⁴⁴ The majority of boys (52 percent) who enlisted in 1943 joined the RCAF. Joining the Canadian forces might have been an expedited (or easier) way to enlist rather than returning to Britain. The Canadian services also may have had difference entrance requirements. Some other evacuees may have simply wanted to join the Canadian forces to enlist alongside their new Canadian peers. Male evacuees were not the only ones who enlisted, as some girl evacuees were enthusiastic to make their own contribution. Private evacuee Veronica Owens gained her parents' permission to return from Canada in 1942 and, upon return, joined the WRNS.⁴⁵ Dorothy Slee enlisted in the RCAF Women's Division in July 1943 at the age of eighteen and took up a post at the Number 7 Manning Depot at Rockcliffe, Ontario.⁴⁶ Although perhaps subject to less societal and peer pressure to join the forces in Canada, female evacuees were not beyond wanting to play

⁴¹ TNA, DO 131/35, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Settlement Overseas of CORB Children".

⁴² Author's Evacuee Database, Brian Booth, Edwyn Johnson.

⁴³ Author's Evacuee Database, Colin Halliwell.

⁴⁴ Author's Evacuee Database, Geoffrey Hogwood.

⁴⁵ IWM Documents, 134, "Private Papers of Miss V H M Owens".

⁴⁶ Author's Evacuee Database, Dorothy Slee.

their own role in the war effort. By enlisting, the evacuees took command over their own wartime experience, exchanging evacuation for service to King and Country.

A number of evacuees also returned to Britain before the end of the war on account of emotional strain. As evacuees reached the age at which they were permitted to leave, some parents saw bringing their children home as the best option. Terence West, who turned seventeen in 1943, had been placed in the nominated home of his aunt, Mrs. Donald Norman, in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. There was no recorded indication of discontent on either Terence's or his aunt's part until August 1943 when he was moved to another foster home. His case file then indicated "see dockets for details of Terence's escapade, May 14th 1943, and for escapade of July 5th". Although no details of these escapades were included in the case file, the events were clearly significant enough for Terence to be moved. As the best solution, "arrangements [were] made to send him back to England".⁴⁷ Five evacuee boys between sixteen and seventeen years old returned in 1943 due to extreme cases of maladjustment. Eric Halverson arrived when he was thirteen and "failed to settle down in three homes", was "uncooperative", and subsequently was placed in Wendale House, Westmount, Montreal. In July 1943 Eric ran away and was discovered two months later working on a farm in New Brunswick. Arrangements were made for Eric's return to Britain in November 1943.⁴⁸ John Temple became a difficult case, according to his case file, because he was "very homesick and awkward". John went to live with the principal of his school who provided "an understanding environment" until his departure in June 1943.⁴⁹ Perhaps the most extreme case was William Coring who arrived back in Scotland on December 4, 1943 after his "imprisonment for 3 months for being in possession of and driving a car without owner's consent".⁵⁰ His case file, however, does not state that he was returned to Britain because Canadian authorities no longer wanted to deal with him. There is no evidence that

⁴⁷ Author's Evacuee Database, Terence West.

⁴⁸ Author's Evacuee Database, Eric Halverson.

⁴⁹ Author's Evacuee Database, John Temple.

⁵⁰ Author's Evacuee Database, William Coring. His case file does not include a date of imprisonment nor does it explicitly state that he was returned because of his imprisonment just simply notes when it happened.

Canada rejected evacuees as they became “difficult”, although there very well may have been sharp discussions with evacuees’ parents. Rather, there appeared to be understanding that in some cases the behaviour was the result of the separation from their family.

Female evacuees also suffered the stresses of maladjustment. By 1943, sixteen-year-old twins Patricia and Mavis Curley were living separately in Toronto. Mavis had exhibited “behavioural problems” in her first placement, which led her to being placed at Moulton College, a boarding school in Toronto; Patricia was shuffled through three homes by December 1940 but apparently settled into her fourth foster home until her foster mother became ill, moving her yet again.⁵¹ In another instance, Margaret Emmerson returned to Britain as she wished to train as a teacher, but also because her parents were in contact with the Toronto Children’s Aid Society regarding her welfare.⁵² For some evacuees, the desire to return home was much clearer. According to her case file, Margaret Lawson “found it very difficult to fit into Canadian life” and, despite eventually settling down happily and working hard at school, was “anxious to return to England”.⁵³ Two evacuees were explicitly sent back to Britain, once they were old enough, for their emotional wellbeing. Upon turning seventeen Margaret Smith returned to Glasgow. Her case file provides a peculiar explanation for her return: Margaret had been born in Canada but was being sent home to Britain “on mental advice owing to reverse homesickness which was affecting her health”.⁵⁴ The reverse homesickness meant that although she was born in Canada, she longed for Britain. In another difficult situation, Mary Ford was sent home to York at age seventeen. In November 1941, Mary had been admitted to hospital in “a highly nervous state, needing constant care” although considerable progress was made by January 1942. Sadly, Mary had a relapse in 1942 and was admitted to Halifax hospital due to a mental breakdown and returned to Britain in

⁵¹ Author’s Evacuee Database, Patricia and Mavis Curley.

⁵² Author’s Evacuee Database, Margaret Emmerson. The issue is unclear. She only had two foster homes and did not have much on her file to suggest difficulty.

⁵³ Author’s Evacuee Database, Margaret Lawson.

⁵⁴ Author’s Evacuee Database, Margaret Smith.

October, 1943.⁵⁵ In all situations, evacuees were not frivolously returned to Britain by Canadian authorities, but were only returned when they reached an age deemed appropriate for return, were recalled by their parents, or wanted to return to enlist; Canada maintained her promise to Britain.

While some evacuees were already on their way home to Britain, the majority of evacuees were only just dreaming of their return. Some evacuees even wrote to their parents of their hopes to return. For instance, Anthony Paish wrote to his parents on August 3, 1943 “I do hope that the war will be over and we can return to England soon”.⁵⁶ This was an understandable sentiment as Anthony had not seen his parents for three long years. Just a few months earlier, Patricia Cave had written similarly to her parents, although she more forcefully demanded a ticket to return home with the explanation that “there is no danger of invasion now and you say there are very few air raids and I want to come back”.⁵⁷ The evacuees had some comprehension of the war and used it to express their desire to be reunited with their family. This became ever more apparent when the war took a different course in 1944. Tom Sharp wrote to his mother on June 12, 1944, six days after the D-Day invasion of Normandy, “I hope they will be able to spare one ship from the invasion to take me back to England”.⁵⁸ In Tom’s mind, the ships that would take him home would be the same as those used for the invasion. Yet these letters also suggest that the evacuees perceived it safe to return home. Some foster parents were just as interested in the war news, but were perhaps a bit more sceptical about the children’s safety. Patricia Silver’s foster mother wrote to Patricia’s mother on March 17, 1944 sympathising with the desire for evacuee parents to have their children back: “we all know how you and the rest of the folks who have kiddies over here are eating their hearts out to have them home again, that is only natural”.⁵⁹ She suggested

⁵⁵ Author’s Evacuee Database, Mary. Her case files notes “For report on early history see docket 15”. The document has not survived but Mary might have had early childhood trauma.

⁵⁶ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

⁵⁷ IWM Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”.

⁵⁸ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

⁵⁹ IWM Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”. Patricia Silver’s foster mother wrote on March 17, 1944 in regards to Patricia’s return: “just got through reading that letter from the overseas board,

though, that “the only sensible thing to do is to leave them here until all danger is past” explaining that “It would be a heart breaker though should an attempt be made to get them home now, and then something dreadful happen to them”. Speaking on behalf of all foster parents, Patricia’s foster mother wrote “we are only too happy to keep them with us until the war is over, and we can all be reasonably assured that their journey home will be free from all hazards and dangers”. She ended her letter “we are keeping fingers crossed for the coming invasion”. In a separate letter from 1944, Patricia’s foster mother again recorded her desire for the war to end so the children could go home as she wrote “all eyes and ears on France these days and hoping that in the very near future you will hear the sirens howling the last ‘all clear’ and that you will have the pleasure of tearing down the blackout curtains”.⁶⁰ Despite some evacuees and their foster and biological parents becoming war-weary and anxiously wanting their return home, most evacuees would have to wait well into 1944 for this to happen.

As Tom Sharp had forecasted, when the invasion of Normandy started to turn the tide of war, evacuees increasingly began to return home. This trend continued through the summer months of 1944 as the break out from Normandy progressed. Eighteen evacuees departed in June, twenty-five in July, twenty-eight in August, and eighteen in September.⁶¹ The number of evacuees departing continued to grow with thirty-one leaving in October, twenty-seven in November, and fifty-eight in December.⁶² From those case files containing the actual arrival dates in Britain, it is easy to see when groups of evacuees travelled together. For example, forty-nine of the children who left Canada in December actually travelled together from New York, arriving in Liverpool on December twenty-one, just in time for Christmas.⁶³ The evacuees who departed in 1944 therefore accounted for almost 16 percent of all CORB children who had originally arrived in

and I agree with them for the most part, especially as to when these kiddies will be able to return to their homes”.

⁶⁰ IWM Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”.

⁶¹ Author’s Evacuee Database.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *Ancestry*, UK Incoming Passenger Lists, December 21, 1944. “Hugh Wills”

Canada in 1940. Of the 238 evacuees who returned in 1944, one was from PEI, four from New Brunswick, twenty from Saskatchewan, twenty-two from each of Nova Scotia and Quebec, twenty-four from Alberta, thirty from Manitoba, thirty-four from British Columbia, and eighty-one from Ontario. This spread is proportional to the original placement distribution of children across the provinces. The “duration” of evacuation for evacuees who left in 1944 was only four years. The number of private evacuees who left during the same timeframe is impossible to estimate. By January 1945, there were still 1,155 evacuees under the care of CORB. The rate of evacuee departures in early 1945 was steadily increasing from the 1944 trend as the perceived end of the war suggested a safe return to Britain. A total of 795 evacuees returned to Canada in 1945, just over half of the total number of evacuees in Canada. This started with only ten children departing in January, sixty-one in February, and seventeen in March. April saw 149 evacuees embark for home and May saw 109 children leave Canada.⁶⁴ Some evacuees who left at the end of April received the best news while en route: Victory in Europe had finally come. Some evacuees like Jean Cheyne aboard the *Cavina* had the exciting pleasure of celebrating VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) as they crossed the Atlantic while others enjoyed the spectacular occasion of pulling into the harbour just after news of VJ Day (Victory in Japan) broke.⁶⁵

Upon news that the war was finally over, many more evacuees flooded home; ninety-three children left in June, 166 in July, and 142 in August.⁶⁶ In the summer months of 1945, 401 children left, almost exactly five years after they had left their family in Britain. Victory in Japan Day on August 15 (in the UK) finally signalled the end of the war. Another forty-eight children left between September and December 1945. For these children, their evacuation had not only lasted longer than four years, but was longer than their peers’. Without the database, historians have been unable to plot evacuees’ returns. By organising the 1945 departures by province rather than by month,

⁶⁴ Author’s Evacuee Database. These are return dates so some would have left end of March.

⁶⁵ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, Jean Morton nee Cheyne, Dorothy Robson. The *Cavina* docked at London on May 16, 1945.

⁶⁶ Author’s Evacuee Database.

the groups of children who departed together become apparent. Siblings often returned together. The only two children to depart from Alberta in January 1945 were Dorothy and Geoffrey Kirby who had been living with their uncle in Calgary. The database reveals that evacuees would have traveled back with each other because they had been located in proximity to each other. A ship that arrived in Britain on July 26, 1945 was carrying thirteen evacuees from Alberta: three from Calgary, seven from Edmonton, and three from the surrounding area. It would be quite likely that the children traveled over to Canada together, met each other at the provincial distribution centre, knew each other during the war, interacted in the public space, and crossed paths with each other again upon return. One of the largest groups of CORB evacuees to return together arrived in Britain on July 10, 1945. On that ship, thirty-one of the seventy evacuees were traveling from British Columbia. Similarly, the next ship to depart and arrive in Britain on July 26, 1945 was carrying eighty-three evacuees, of whom forty-two were returning from Ontario.⁶⁷ If some of the children had crossed paths on their way over to Canada (and still remembered the meeting) then it would have been a full five years since they had seen their peers. By framing evacuees' returns by date, province, and ship, another public space where evacuees could interact with each other is revealed.

Although the war had come to an end, there were evacuees whose evacuation was not yet over and who returned to Britain late, for reasons other than simply waiting for transportation. Evacuees such as John Haikings were able to remain in Canada until their school term or course finished. Six evacuees were permitted to stay at schools in British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, and Quebec to complete secondary education courses while nine delayed return to Britain to complete a university course at institutions in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba.⁶⁸ Evacuees who enlisted would also have returned home later than their original evacuee compatriots. There were also four evacuees, all female, who remained in Canada until January 1946. Audrey Pitt had been sent from London to PEI when she was twelve, but was moved four times as, according to her case file, she was "difficult". After a period of refusing to go to

⁶⁷ Author's Evacuee Database, Dorothy and Geoffrey Kirby.

⁶⁸ Author's Evacuee Database, "Remaining as Settlers".

school and then starting a course at a commercial college, Audrey decided to join the RCAF Women's Division in June 1943. This commitment came to an end and she returned to Britain on January 7, 1946.⁶⁹ Beryl Bellamy likely travelled with Audrey, arriving on the same day. The delay in Beryl's return was apparently due to her wishes to "adopt a nursing career and parents leaving her at school to qualify for nursing entrance exam". Her case file noted "a very shy girl, girl's health not been good".⁷⁰ Although she may have completed her qualifying exam, upon return Beryl left behind her brother Donald as he too was staying on to complete courses.⁷¹ However, Beryl had already said goodbye to another brother, Byron who had returned home in April 1945.⁷² Even within one family, there were three different durations of evacuation. Christine Crozier also returned to Britain on January 7, 1946 at the age of fourteen. Like Beryl, Christine left a brother behind as Edward, who was just shy of eighteen, was staying in Canada.⁷³ Christine's parents, however, (as recorded on Kenneth's case file) had expressed intentions of joining the children after the war. The last evacuee to leave Canada under CORB was Enid Shippen, a girl who had arrived aged thirteen as one of the earliest evacuees to reach Canada. Her evacuation therefore could very well have been the longest of all CORB evacuees. When she arrived in Britain on January 14, 1946 she had left behind her two brothers Kenneth, sixteen, and Peter, who was seventeen.⁷⁴ All three had remained together for the duration of the war in the unnominated home of Charles Wings in Parksville, British Columbia. As her case file sheds no light on the reason for her late departure, one might suggest that she was deliberating on whether to return. As their father had died before their evacuation to Canada, Enid lived with her mother upon return. Although it is unclear whether Enid at some point rejoined her brothers or whether Beryl's brother Donald ever returned to Britain, these cases demonstrate just how diverse the duration and the experience of evacuation became. Families had already been split up due to evacuation as the evacuees departed from Britain, but the end of the war and the

⁶⁹ Author's Evacuee Database, Audrey Pitt.

⁷⁰ Author's Evacuee Database, Beryl Bellamy.

⁷¹ Author's Evacuee Database, Donald Bellamy.

⁷² Author's Evacuee Database, Byron Bellamy.

⁷³ Author's Evacuee Database, Christine and Edward Crozier.

⁷⁴ Author's Evacuee Database, Enid, Kenneth, and Peter Shippen,.

end of their evacuation clearly did not always result in a reunited family. Finally, two evacuees might have wanted to return home as soon as the war was over, but unfortunately had to wait as they were deemed “unfit to travel”. Christina Wotherspoon had been admitted to Mountain Sanatorium on March 10, 1944 in Hamilton, Ontario, and therefore had to remain in Canada until healthy enough to travel.⁷⁵ Similarly, Sylvia Tann had received treatment in a sanatorium for tuberculosis, but was discharged in 1941; however, a report from the sanatorium in June 1945 stated that Sylvia would need another year of treatment and therefore could not return.⁷⁶

In total, 111 evacuees are recorded in the database as choosing not to return to Britain at all. The three evacuees who died in Canada did not return home. There were a further thirty-two evacuees who withdrew from the CORB program at different points during the war for various reasons.⁷⁷ In 1941, Joan Kinnear and Rona Anderson were the first evacuees to be withdrawn from the CORB scheme as they were “contracted out” from CORB’s care and entered Ottawa Ladies’ College.⁷⁸ In 1942, only Charles Keating from Glasgow was withdrawn from CORB, at the age of twelve. The reason for Charles’ withdrawal was, however, unique. He had been living with his mother Mrs. O’Reilly in Long Branch, Ontario since his arrival in September 1940 and his case file states that it was “probable that he will remain permanently in her care” but it is unclear why he was only withdrawn in 1942, a full two years after his arrival.⁷⁹ It is also unclear if Charles’ mother was already living in Canada or had made her way to Canada before or after to join him and therefore used CORB as way to have an organised passage for her son. At least five evacuees withdrew in 1943 although in all cases except seventeen-year-old William Wills (who withdrew in May 1943 to take a university course) the reasons are unclear.⁸⁰ Some children were withdrawn from CORB when their biological family

⁷⁵ Author’s Evacuee Database, Christina Wotherspoon.

⁷⁶ Author’s Evacuee Database, Sylvia Tann.

⁷⁷ TNA, DO 131/27, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Statistics of Children Leaving the UK”.

⁷⁸ Author’s Evacuee Database, Joan Kinnear, Rona Anderson.

⁷⁹ Author’s Evacuee Database, Charles Keating.

⁸⁰ Author’s Evacuee Database, William Wills. William’s brother Hugh left in 1944.

members in Canada decided to take full responsibility of them. Arthur and Kathleen Maskrey, for example, were withdrawn in October 1943 as their mother had arrived in Canada; she withdrew the children from CORB's care as soon as she arrived.⁸¹ Other unusual instances included David Mekie who was nine upon arrival and Edward Winchester who was twelve in 1940. David's father was a professor of medicine while Edward's father was listed as a medical practitioner at the general hospital in Singapore. At some point both boys were transferred to their parents in Singapore but were subsequently evacuated again, this time being sent to Perth, Australia.⁸² In total, five sets of siblings were withdrawn together which suggests that withdrawals were based on family wishes rather than CORB's insistence that a child be removed from their care.⁸³

As a clear indication that they were no longer evacuee children, five evacuees did not return to Britain because they had married in Canada during the war. Marguerite Walker got married on June 12, 1944 at the age of nineteen and withdrew from CORB.⁸⁴ At the age of eighteen, Margaret Profitt married Rudolph Anderson on September 10, 1943 in Winnipeg. Despite being married, Margaret only withdrew from CORB three months later on November 18, 1943.⁸⁵ For Margaret, evacuation had been a coincidental way to meet a husband as she had clearly met him whilst living as an evacuee in Winnipeg. Roma Lale got married on January 22, 1944 as she turned eighteen.⁸⁶ Christmas Eve, 1944 became the wedding day for nineteen-year-old Jeanne Gaunt and her fiancé.⁸⁷ Yet staying in Canada after getting married was an option not only for female evacuees. Baden Hall had joined the Royal Canadian Navy in May 1943 and got married the following year and stayed.⁸⁸ For these evacuees, they did not have to say

⁸¹ Author's Evacuee Database, Arthur and Kathleen Maskrey.

⁸² Author's Evacuee Database, David Mekie and Edward Winchester.

⁸³ Author's Evacuee Database, Thomas and Christine Lane were both withdrawn in 1944.

⁸⁴ Author's Evacuee Database, Marguerite Walker.

⁸⁵ Author's Evacuee Database, Margaret Profitt.

⁸⁶ Author's Evacuee Database, Roma Lale.

⁸⁷ Author's Evacuee Database, Jeanne Gaunt.

⁸⁸ Author's Evacuee Database, Baden Hall.

goodbye to their new Canadian family and friends. Their evacuation had shaped their adult lives.

By February 1946, 1,326 of 1,532 CORB evacuees had returned to Britain.⁸⁹ The clear majority of evacuees who did not return to Britain did so because they had decided to stay permanently in Canada as “settlers”. As far back as October 1941, CORB and the Canadian government had thought about the benefits that evacuees could bring to Canada in the postwar period. After meeting with Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Thomas Crerar, and Frederick Blair, Geoffrey Shakespeare made a speech on behalf of CORB expressing his hopes that some evacuees would make Canada their permanent home. His rationale for this was that “They would be the finest missionaries of Empire and the great majority of them, I hoped, would be full of the urge to return to Canada and settle there”.⁹⁰ British immigrants were deemed ethnically suitable and attractive immigrants. Particularly during the Depression in the 1930s, British immigration to Canada had fallen dramatically in comparison to the early twentieth century.⁹¹ According to a CORB memorandum on migration policy, all of the Dominions were “eager to retain CORB” evacuees. Evacuees would be divided into three categories: those who were self-supporting, those who were not but whose parents could make arrangements with foster parents to continue care, and those who were not self-supporting and whose parents could not make such arrangements. Those in the first category required a simple approval by Dominion authorities to stay and a level of supervision by Child Welfare Officers until the evacuee turned eighteen. Parents of those in the second category would be required to begin payments directly to foster parents (the minimum sum was to be determined upon advice from Dominion authorities). Those evacuees who wished to stay in Canada but had no means of support became dependent upon state assistance.

⁸⁹ According to Starns, *Oceans Apart*, 134. She cites TNA, DO 131/27 but it does not appear. 446 of 577 in Australia, 284 out of 355 in South Africa and 153 of 204 in New Zealand.

⁹⁰ TNA, DO 131/32, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Report by Sir G Shakespeare on his Visit to Canada”.

⁹¹ Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 17. For a long view of British emigration to Canada see Colin Pooley and Ian Whyte eds. *Migrants, Emigrants and Immigrants* (London: Routledge 1991).

Canada had always distinguished between “evacuee” and “settler”, the former indicating a temporary status. When evacuees decided to stay permanently in Canada, they had to change their status formally “from that of guest to settler”.⁹² Evacuees, as British subjects, became “settlers” by falling under the purview of the *Empire Settlement Act, 1922* that had been responsible for facilitating the movement of child immigrants like the “Home Children”.⁹³ The CORB memorandum on migration policy suggested that an agreement under the *Empire Settlement Act* between the Canadian and United Kingdom governments could cover costs on a “50/50 basis” or by an annual grant from the central fund, but the latter would place the full burden on the British taxpayer. In either of the categories, evacuees would still be entitled to a free return passage (ocean and rail tickets) within two years.⁹⁴ Such a mechanism allowed those evacuees who had settled in Canada (in terms of education, employment, personal circumstances) to remain and still receive a moderate level of state care. Canada was not inclined to release its obligation to evacuees even once the war had come to an end. Moreover, a letter from CORB to a Mr. Wiseman on December 29, 1945 argued that evacuees would make good settlers: “The fact that they are familiar with the conditions, have had their education in the Dominions and have already made friends is almost a guarantee that they will settle satisfactorily”.⁹⁵ In other words, evacuees’ formal and cultural education received in the public and private spaces while in Canada made them ideal settlers. At least thirty-two

⁹² TNA, DO 131/35, Dominions Office, “Settlement Overseas of CORB Children”. It is interesting that this is the first time that CORB used the term “guest” to refer to evacuees in Canada, December 29, 1945.

⁹³ Kelley and Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic*, 192. Canada also had immigrant-assisted programs to help farm labourers, agriculturalists and domestic immigrants. The *Empire Settlement Act* of 1922 was an agreement between the British government and several commonwealth countries designed to facilitate the resettlement of agriculturalists, farm labourers, domestics and juvenile immigrants throughout the Empire. In Canada, a variety of settlement schemes offered potential immigrants assistance with transportation costs and skill-specific training as incentives for emigration. Approximately 165,000 British immigrants arrived in Canada as participants in different settlement programs, far less than the millions originally envisioned. “Canadian Immigration Acts and Legislation”, Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, accessed June 10, <https://www.pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canadian-immigration-acts-and-legislation>

⁹⁴ See Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 27 for more on how this broadly influenced British emigration to Canada.

⁹⁵ TNA, DO 131/35, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Settlement Overseas of CORB Children”.

evacuees were permitted to remain as “settlers”.⁹⁶ Les Oliver remained in Canada as a settler and joined the Canadian Navy after the war. Wearing the “Canadian” flashes on his shoulders made him feel that he was becoming a Canadian. He never returned to England except for seven years after the war when he had a short leave after docking at a British port. Canada was “where he wanted to be”.⁹⁷

Evacuees also stayed in Canada as settlers because their parents wished to join them permanently. At least fifty evacuees remained in Canada because their parents wished to immigrate and join them.⁹⁸ As early as August 1943, the issue of parents joining their children in Canada after the war was raised with the British High Commissioner in Canada by Mrs. Maxse at CORB, who was assured that “there would be room for all”. It was claimed that Canada would not impede parents from joining their children. In 1942, CORB found that five percent of evacuee parents (relating to all the Dominions) were already “definitely planning to settle overseas” although it was considered that this was an underestimate. In Canada particularly, it was strongly suggested that parents leave their children there until such a time when they could join them because “some of the CORB children have adjusted themselves so happily in the Dominions and have good prospects” and returning them to Britain temporarily would “only unsettle the children and interfere with their education”.⁹⁹ In November 1943, Mr. Jolliffe had confirmed that the government would continue to care for evacuees until their parents arrived in Canada as settlers themselves. CORB parents who were considering “Settlement in Canada” were, however, urged to consider that parents would apparently have to conform to immigration regulations that required settlers “to be of good health and good character” and “have approximately \$200 per adult on arrival”. Parents also had to factor in transportation costs which ranged from £29 for a cabin to £18 and 15 shillings

⁹⁶ Author’s Evacuee Database, “Remain as Settlers”.

⁹⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”.

⁹⁸ Author’s Evacuee Database. There are in fact more mysteries as there are an additional 228 evacuees whose case files do not indicate if or when they returned but neither that they remained in Canada.

⁹⁹ TNA, DO 131/35, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Settlement Overseas of CORB Children”.

for a third class adult passage.¹⁰⁰ Parents were reminded that emigration after age thirty-five “requires unusual powers of adaptability to settle into an entirely new way of life”. Exacerbating the issue was that the postwar period was expected to bring shortages of transportation due to demobilisation. *The Canadian Year Book* recorded that in 1946 just under 40,000 immigrants arrived in Canada.¹⁰¹ Some of these immigrants were evacuee parents. Joan and Gordon Cleverley’s parents managed to join their children quite soon after the war.¹⁰² The father of Percy and Grace Blackman also joined his children in Canada.¹⁰³ It appears that there were rare incidents where parents never fulfilled their promise to join their children. According to their case files, Margaret Aldham and her three sisters were supposed to be joined by their parents. Barbara Ann Lambert in her book *War Brides and Rosies* argues that the Aldham sisters were “abandoned by their parents in Canada”, for their parents never joined them.¹⁰⁴ Private evacuee David Simister stayed with the Harris family well into 1946 because his father never attempted to arrange for his return, as by that time he had remarried and had a new daughter.¹⁰⁵ The Harris family tried to adopt David, but Canadian childcare authorities apparently threatened David’s father that he would be charged with desertion if he did not collect his son. Much to David’s sadness, he was collected by his father and taken to Vancouver. In 1951, at the age of 15, David joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and remained in

¹⁰⁰ TNA, DO 131/35, Dominions Office, Children’s Overseas Reception Board, “Settlement Overseas of CORB Children”. Children under one were free, under ten cost a half fare.

¹⁰¹ Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 11. According to Barber and Watson, the postwar period was the last significant migration from Britain. In the three decades after the Second World War, over 4,000,000 immigrants, including from England, landed in Canada. In all but eight years between 1945 and 1975, the English formed the largest national group of immigrants. Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 1.

¹⁰² Author’s Evacuee Database, Joan and Gordon.

¹⁰³ Author’s Evacuee Database, Percy and Grace Blackman.

¹⁰⁴ Barbara Ann Lambert, *War Brides and Rosies*, (Bloomington: Trafford Publishing, 2012), 226. The girls’ case files make no mention of them being “abandoned”. It is unclear if this term was applied by Lambert or the sisters out of unresolved resentment towards their parents.

¹⁰⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Diana Simister”.

Canada for the rest of his life.¹⁰⁶ Private evacuees do not have case files, making it is impossible to trace the frequency with which they remained in Canada.¹⁰⁷

Evacuees who stayed in Canada after the war, to a large extent, were able to carry on with their lives with little adjustment. The story was very different for evacuees, both CORB and private, who had to return home. CORB foster parents had assistance making plans for evacuees' return; once it was decided that the child should be returned to Britain, the necessary forms were completed and then it became a matter of waiting for news of departure. In contrast, the foster parents of private evacuees were responsible for arranging for the transportation of their charge's return. Although private foster parents received general instructions from Canadian authorities, they still had to navigate a complex and time-consuming process. In April 1944, Tom Sharp's parents had agreed for him to return to Britain. His foster mother, Marie Williamson, made sure to keep his parents apprised as she set out to arrange his journey. On April 27, 1944, Marie explained "we are working on Tom's passage –there is a lot of red tape and it's all a question of time – waiting for this and waiting for that". A few days later Marie wrote again with news of their "little progress". Marie explained that they "wrote to the Ministry of War transportation. They sent us an application for an exit permit, which we filled out and sent back to the Immigration dept [sic] at Ottawa". Once Marie received the exit permit, it had to be "forwarded with Tom's passport to the Dept of external affairs [sic]".¹⁰⁸ One of the main obstacles was that most private children had to depart from New York; entering the United States of America required additional documentation. Tom's passport had to be validated for travel to the USA. Once returned to them with the permit, as Marie continued to explain, Tom would have to be taken to "the US consulate (2 visits at least) and get a US visa (new photos etc) then, when his final notice to leave arrives, we

¹⁰⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Roger Harris".

¹⁰⁷ One option is to go through passenger lists for each evacuee on Ancestry. That will show if they returned but it will not be as foolproof for those who did not return or those who returned to Canada in the years after.

¹⁰⁸ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, "Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family".

have to take him back to the US consulate for an “in-transit” certification”. The process was clearly tiring as Marie wrote with exasperation “All this for possibly 24 hours in the USA!”.¹⁰⁹ Other private evacuees faced a similar process; Tom Sharp was not alone in these preparations. Anthony Paish reported to his parents that he went to the passport office with his foster mother to get his passport.¹¹⁰ With the excited anticipation of returning home but also with the thrill of actively participating in preparations for her return, Julie Kemp wrote to her parents “I signed some papers and I felt quite important. I can come home any time between July 1 and now”.¹¹¹

While foster parents completed paperwork, private evacuees did receive external assistance for their voyage. Private groups such as those organised by the Ford Motor Company or Byron House School returned to Britain as a unit. Some individual evacuees, much like those CORB evacuees who left early in 1942/3, were able to utilise the White Ensign scheme. Anthony Paish explained to his parents on November 21, 1943 that there was the possibility of him having “a chance to get back to England in the spring by means of the white ensign an organisation for getting back English boys to Great Britain”. A week later, on November 29, 1943, Anthony Paish’s foster mother, Mrs. Wilson, cabled his parents to inform them that satisfactory arrangements had been made: “Anthony on white ensign list in spring let cooks london [sic] office have approval made arrangements this sign =Wilson”.¹¹² CORB evacuees, much like in 1940, were supervised on their return journey. While private evacuees were not under the same care of a central authority, there were still mechanisms in place to ensure that children were not lost. Marie Williamson explained to Margaret Sharp that the Canadian committee had a rule to provide an “escort for the train trip to NY (overnight) but that the boys are always met in NY and taken charge of and entertained and delivered at the appointed time to the appropriate hotel, where they are turned over to the Admiralty, who take charge of them from then on”. Finally, Marie explained that the committee had perfected

¹⁰⁹ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹¹⁰ IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

¹¹¹ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

¹¹² IWM Documents, 3284, “Private Papers of Anthony Paish”.

its organisation over the preceding six months so that when the children departed, “a cable is sent, and through the machinery of the CORB, committees in all the ports are notified”.¹¹³ Even if private evacuees were not under CORB care, CORB’s established communication networks could be utilised for private evacuees as well.

Once all paperwork was complete, evacuees just had to wait for notice of their ship’s departure. This time afforded the completion of other important preparations. Just as evacuees’ biological parents had carefully packed their children’s suitcases in 1940, foster parents carried out the same routine years later. Private evacuees in particular had luggage restrictions to abide by.¹¹⁴ Marie Williamson had explained to Tom’s mother that he was “only allowed 150 lbs luggage (including trunks and hand luggage)”.¹¹⁵ Careful packing was required to ensure that evacuees returned with the important items they had arrived with but also the new belongings they had accumulated over the years. Unlike when they left Britain and left belongings at home, evacuees were in theory leaving Canada forever and had to decide what to bring back with them. Marie came up with an idea as she explained “I am a bit hazy as to how much 150lbs is, so I am going to pack a trunk and weigh it, to get an idea”. These restrictions meant that things would inevitably have to be left behind and Marie explained that Tom would not “be able to take such things as his books, his heavy box of minibrix and things like that”.¹¹⁶ Julie Kemp, even at the age of ten, understood that she needed to prepare her luggage carefully. She wrote to her parents on January 7, 1945 “Dear Mummie, I am beginning to pack my toys now. I have packed my whole farm and some other things”.¹¹⁷ Such keepsakes were important to help the children remind them of their time in Canada.¹¹⁸ As much as toys were children’s treasured belongings, there were necessities to include. Marie Williamson, like many foster parents, recognised that Britain was under strict

¹¹³ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹¹⁴ CORB files make no mention of what CORB children were permitted to bring back to Britain.

¹¹⁵ 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹¹⁶ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹¹⁷ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

¹¹⁸ In a 1945 radio broadcast entitled “The Return of the Evacuated Child”, Winnicott reinforced the importance for evacuees to bring items back with them to help them remember Canada. Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 37.

rationing as she wrote on April 27, 1944 “I would like to send him home well outfitted. Clothing is far from plentiful but I expect not nearly so scarce as with you –and not rationed”. Even so, this was not an easy feat as Marie wrote about a month later that she had started to collect clothes for Tom but “had not realised quite how scarce things had become and how greatly quality deteriorated”. Many evacuees also had made their contribution to the war effort by collecting war saving stamps but these too needed to be prepared for the children’s return. Marie wrote to Margaret for example that “Tom has two war savings certificates of \$5.00 each” and not wanting to pack them loosely in his trunk, decided “I think I’ll just leave them here and post them to him after the war when mail is safe”.¹¹⁹ Money, too, was something to be organised for Julie Kemp’s mother as she expressed her wishes that “any money of Julie’s name in Vancouver should be used for her expenses and yours as far as possible. We should very much prefer this - I don’t know how much there is or if it will be only be a drop in the ocean but please use it up”.¹²⁰ Arranging evacuees’ transportation and their personal belongings was one of the final tasks for foster parents in caring for their “war guests”.

As evacuees’ departures approached, foster parents had to explain to evacuees that they were going “home”. Thus began the experience of evacuees once again being uprooted. Although most evacuees surely responded with jubilation at the thought of seeing their families again, many felt an uneasiness. As when some evacuees were given little warning of their departure from Britain in 1940, the news of their return sometimes came as a shock. Catherine Anderson recalled “the actual news was given to me at lunchtime and I disgraced myself by exclaiming ‘what?!!’, thus earning a most unusual scolding from Uncle Billy”.¹²¹ When Pam Mace was told she was to return to England she cried her eyes out as she did not want to go home.¹²² John Haikings felt uneasy when his foster mother started packing his suitcase just after VE-Day. He was unsure “what the future would hold for [him]” as he “had become more or less a Canadian, living a happy

¹¹⁹ CWM, 58A 1 273.1-51, “Letters of Marie Williamson and the Sharp Family”.

¹²⁰ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

¹²¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

¹²² Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Pam Mace nee Bland”.

life in [his] adopted home and at school and memories of my previous existence as a Yorkshire schoolboy had faded into the past".¹²³ After four to five years in Canada, evacuees were unsure of how drastically their lives would change once again.

With great concern for the child's future, foster parents also had to cope with losing a child to whom they had become much attached. Especially for foster parents who had no biological children, losing an evacuee truly felt like losing a child of their own. Foster parents had willingly made this sacrifice to care for a child all the while knowing it was a temporary arrangement, and the emotional impact of parting from the child has not received as much scholarly attention as is merited. Remarkably, some biological parents foresaw this emotional strain. Julie Kemp's mother showed particular empathy as she wrote to Julie's foster mother about Julie's impending departure. On October 2, 1944 Julie's biological mother wrote "I wish I could talk to you somehow. I don't know which is worse, my longing for Julie, or the knowledge of how much you will miss her". Recognising how much Julie's foster mother had fallen for Julie, her mother promised "I will bring her back, the very first holiday that can be arranged". On October 20, 1944 Julie's mother boldly wrote "we do know how miserable it is for you". The sentiment only grew as Julie's departure grew nearer; on December 31, 1944 Julie's mother wrote "I am sorry that you now feel upset too about Julie. I knew you would, but I wanted to spare you as much as possible".¹²⁴ By the time she returned home in 1945, Julie had spent almost half her life with her foster parents. As evacuation reversed itself, foster families came to feel the sorrow that British parents had felt almost half a decade earlier.

As evacuees had carved out a space for themselves in public spaces while in Canada, they also had to say goodbye to their Canadian friends. The friends of Dennis Drew were very upset when he left to go home.¹²⁵ In Stratford, Ontario, Mary Hume's friends decided to immortalise themselves by signing her autograph book. Some notes were humorously lighthearted; one person wrote "I hope you never feel the colour of this

¹²³ Author's Evacuee Collection, John Haikings. "Safety in Annapolis Royal", *Spectator*, December 6, 2005.

¹²⁴ IWM Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

¹²⁵ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Dennis Drew".

page”. The page, of course, was blue. “Believe me or believe not, Thy Smiles can never be forgot” wrote Evelyn Gell, while another friend wrote “May you look forward with pleasure, And backward without regret, Love Myrtle Walker”. Reflecting the importance of her friendship, Harold Gibbons wrote “Dear Mary – Friendship is a chain of gold Shaped in God’s all perfect mould Each link, a smile, a laugh, a tear, A grip of the hand, a word of cheer. As steadfast as the ages roll Binding closer soul to soul No matter how far, or heavy the load, Sweet is the journey on friendship’s road”. With a fear that she would someday forget them, the notes emphasised Mary’s need to *remember*, both them and her time in Canada. On July 26, 1945 Mary’s friend Isobel Walker wrote “Dear Mary, In your woodbox of remembrance, Place a chip for me”. Her friend Joan Bowers wrote “Dear Mary: I write here not for beauty, I write here not for fame, I write to be remembered, and here I sign my name”. Below her signature, Joan wrote her address with a side note “I hope you will take the hint”. Staying in touch with evacuees was equally important to Canadian children. Shirley Brown wrote, “Remember the good old school days When you and I were young We used to sit together And chew each others [sic] gum Yours till Iskimos [sic] wear straw hats”. Shirley signed “12B” symbolising the class they shared together.¹²⁶ Evacuees like Mary Hume had made meaningful friendships in school, at play, and through activities and her autograph book is a rare insight into how Canadian youth expressed their parting from evacuees. Also important were tokens of remembrance. Catherine Anderson was given a gold Guide pin from her Girl Guide group and her class gave her a silver bracelet with an enamel maple leaf. The mother of one of Catherine’s friends even organised a “handkerchief shower” for her which she thought a novel idea. At dinner on Catherine’s last evening with her foster parents, her Aunt Lola and Uncle Billy gave her a little gold wrist watch, which she still treasures to this day.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Mary Richardson nee Hume”.

¹²⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”. Catherine noted: “The Guide pin and the bracelet, sadly, were taken in a burglary, along with my carefully preserved evacuation identification tags, years later when we lived in Michigan. Fortunately, I must have been wearing the watch. I have it still, kept in good order by an old-fashioned watchmaker, and now on its third replacement bracelet. Now it is only worn on dressy occasions”.

Evacuees' identity as war guests meant that as they departed, their schools and peers often made sure to mark the occasion. Fellow girls in the Havergal College 1945 *Ludemus*, for instance, wrote for 1944 "many of our English girls have gone home and we are sad to have said "Au revoir" to them, but so glad that they are with their parents again: some day we hope to have a branch of the Old Girls Association in England".¹²⁸ The suggestion of a new branch in England pointed to a lasting connection as a result of the girls' arrival, and also showed that the evacuees were considered Old Girls, a bestowed honour. Again, the evacuees were referred to with possessive terms like "our girls". As Jean Ingham prepared to depart in 1944 she received a letter from her Principal at Branksome Hall which reflected the purpose of the school's English girls' presence but also provided words and advice which Jean was to take home with her. Principal Edith Read wrote, "four years ago this summer you came to Canada and to Branksome, and with others, helped to give us the most interesting four years in our history". The value of evacuation was clear, according to Read: "I believe that by living and working together you from Britain and our girls of Canada gained something which is invaluable not only for ourselves but for our empire." Read further told Jean to "carry on" before suggesting that they all meet again "at a grand reunion in London" and finally thanked her for "the splendid contribution you made not only to our school but to Canada- we shall always be in your debt".¹²⁹ Evacuees were cast as having made a contribution to their communities and to Canada; their presence would have lasting impacts.

Equally, evacuees' public identity as war guests in the broader community meant that their departure was recorded in newspapers, particularly in small communities where their presence was most noticeable. The long span of time over which evacuees departed meant that such coverage is often harder to find in comparison to the news coverage of their arrivals in the summer of 1940. To reflect the length of time the children had spent in Canada, some newspapers chose to contrast two photos of the evacuees – upon arrival, and upon departure. The *Stratford Beacon-Herald*, for instance, ran an article on Mary Hume under the title "Regrets Leaving Canada Stratford War Guest Hoping to Return

¹²⁸ HCA, *Ludemus* 1944, 11.

¹²⁹ IWM Documents, 15368, "Private Papers of Miss J Ingham".

Soon”. Including a picture taken just after her arrival at age twelve and one taken just before she left at age seventeen the article was “showing a striking change since coming to Stratford five years ago”. Mary came to Canada as a girl and left as a young woman and the article noted “Mary has loved her life in Canada and promises to return as soon as possible”.¹³⁰ Newspapers also emphasised the ways that evacuation had “changed” evacuees. “Parents of Guest Children Due for Surprise Aplenty” in *The Maple Leaf* on February 21, 1945 reported the departure of Jean Hadfield and Robert Keith McIvor from Edmonton. Arriving at age eight and seven respectively, the article underscored the natural aging of the children; Jean arrived with a “homely rag doll” and Robert, “a picture book as big as himself”.¹³¹ The article further accentuated their Canadian cultural education arguing, “they arrived completely English, with accents and tweedy clothes. Now they are Canadian down to their “okays”, “sures” and confident mannerism”, calling this the “five-year Canadian treatment”. In an almost taunting fashion, C.B. Hill, the provincial Child Welfare Department head in Alberta suggested, “there [sic] parents will probably ship them right back and claim the wrong youngsters were sent”. This outlandish statement suggested that their time in Canada had changed the children so much that they would be unrecognisable to their parents. While some poignantly bade farewell to the nation’s young “guests”, others pointed towards what lay ahead for evacuees upon return to Britain.

With separation from their foster homes, schools, peers, and communities, evacuees were uprooted from the lives they had come to know for a significant portion of their childhood. To commemorate her impending departure, Elizabeth Paish wrote “PPS It would be funny if I reached England before this letter did, wouldn’t it?”¹³² It was letters like these that ended the four- to five-year-long correspondence of evacuees’ with their parents. The evacuees no longer had to worry about keeping in touch with their family. Yet departures came with a similar pain as leaving their families behind in Britain. Exacerbating this was the fact that most evacuees departing in 1945 were given as little

¹³⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Mary Richardson nee Hume”. Mary did in fact return to Canada.

¹³¹ “Parents of Guest Children Due for Surprise Aplenty” *Maple Leaf*, February 21, 1945.

¹³² IWM Documents, 3283, “Private Papers of Miss E M Paish”.

as forty-eight hours' notice. John Macnab found his departure in July 1945 a shockingly paradoxical event. He remembered playing with his friends at school one day and the next waiting in line with his sister to board the train. According to John, the "goodbyes were heartbreaking"; his departure caused much sorrow for his foster parents.¹³³

Goodbyes for Catherine Anderson were said quickly and included a hard parting from Peter, the family dog.¹³⁴ Although Maureen Burke's classmates came to wave her off at the train station in London, Ontario, her uncle did not as he was "too upset".¹³⁵ As Mary Hume left Stratford, Ontario, her foster mother decided to write a goodbye message in Mary's autograph book. On July 21, 1945, her foster mother wrote "Dear Mary: - When in the twilight you are sitting And your mind from care is free When of loved ones you are thinking Will you sometimes think of me". Penning her goodbye in the form of a poem, Mary's foster mother signed the message "Love 'Maw' Hollenbeck".¹³⁶ Unlike British parents who were, if all went well, supposed to see their children again, foster parents had no such guarantee. Rather than temporary, evacuees' departures from them were permanent. It was not only individuals from whom evacuees had to part. In July 1945 John Haikings boarded the train in Annapolis Royal for Halifax "with a heavy heart, sad to be leaving [his] Canadian family and [his] Canadian way of life". The years that evacuees stayed in Canada, particularly if they had found happiness in their foster families and the landscapes around them, had become their lives; the end of the war signalled the end of that Canadian life.

Compared to their journey to Canada in 1940, evacuees' voyages back to Britain were less exciting and therefore less worthy of being recorded by evacuees.¹³⁷ CORB evacuees departed Canada in groups smaller than those in which they had arrived. Evacuees were still supervised on board for the journey, but this time by Canadian escorts. Kenneth Rivers and his wife were going to Britain, so Mrs. Rivers was contracted by CORB to

¹³³ Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Macnab".

¹³⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson".

¹³⁵ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Maureen Burke".

¹³⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Mary Richardson nee Hume".

¹³⁷ The result of this however is that there are fewer contemporary sources that illuminate the experiences of the evacuees' journey home and their post-evacuation lives so post-war sources have to be employed.

look after children on the *Pasteur*, the same ship that John Macnab returned on. Just like the British escorts who had brought the children to Canada, the Canadian escorts returning the children were given payment for their services. Despite CORB's responsibilities seemingly winding down, escorts were still in communication with CORB, even after arrival in Britain. On February 2, 1945 a CORB representative wrote to Miss Jenner who had just escorted children back to Britain. The note requested a full report and "any notes on individual children as soon as convenient" while hoping that they "had a good voyage and that there have been no particular difficulties amongst the children".¹³⁸ Mary Hume was fortunate to receive a week's notice that she would be departing on an army ship, the *Stratheden*, on August 8, 1945. That the ship left from Quebec City provided Mary with the unique opportunity to meet her long time French pen-pal who lived there. Somehow, her pen-pal was allowed to board the ship to meet Mary for the first time.¹³⁹

Evacuees, four to five years older, traversed the space of the ship in a different way than on their journey over. Instead of a space to run free and explore, older evacuees found it as a space to socialise. It was a chance to meet fellow passengers. Mary Hume's autograph book proves that the ship was a suitable place to meet and interact with fellow passengers. One decided to write Mary some words of wisdom "Always remember when the heart sets on fire Smoke gets into your eyes!" signing it "a shipmate". The journey was also an opportunity for some to meet fellow evacuees. For example, Mary Hume met Les Oliver on the journey. They became friends in spite of never having crossed paths before as Les had lived in British Columbia and Mary in Ontario.¹⁴⁰ It is evident that a sense of commonality, either in identity or experience, was formed between Mary and her shipmates. Another note in Mary's autograph book was from Maud Margaron which

¹³⁸ TNA, DO 131/37, Dominions Office, Children's Overseas Reception Board, "Return of CORB Children from Canada to UK".

¹³⁹ Mary however, was not permitted to leave the ship even though her friend wanted her to come to her house. Author's Evacuee Collection, "Mary Richardson nee Hume".

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

read “In the woodshed of your memory’s let me ere be a stick”.¹⁴¹ Although Maud had signed it “your SS Stratheden friend”, suggesting that they too had only just met, Maud was also an evacuee. A subsequent note came from Barbara Hewitt who joked “little grains of powder, little dabs of paint That makes a girls complexion [sic] realy [sic] what it ain’t”.¹⁴² Barbara, too, was an evacuee and had lived in Montreal. Joan Moorhouse, who wrote a cautious warning “Your future lies before you Like a sheet of driven snow Be careful how you step on it, For every step will show”, was also an evacuee and had lived in Perth, Ontario.¹⁴³ The return journey had brought together four evacuees from Bradford, Grimsby, Chelmsford, and London who had lived in distant parts of Canada. The commonality that they all shared was their “war guest” identity and their shared experience as evacuees; in that they found instant friendship. Such socialising certainly would have been enjoyed alongside other events aboard. Jean Ingham, for example, kept as a souvenir the menu card from the Farewell Dinner. Jean had the honour of having hers signed by Commander W. Peasse, who wrote “happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again”; the captain was thus taking on the role of Britain, symbolising her departure and return.¹⁴⁴

The journey home for private evacuees was sometimes less direct and less comfortable. Some private evacuees like Tom Sharp took a different route, often leaving from New York. Once Marie Williamson got word of Tom’s sailing date in June 1944, she sent him to Toronto to meet his brother Christopher, who had been living with their uncle in the US. Along with about eighteen other evacuee boys, Tom and Christopher set sail on an aircraft carrier that was being used to transport planes. They used the pilots’ ready room on board as accommodation space.¹⁴⁵ A group of Ford children traveled to New York under the charge of Shirley Campbell and then boarded the *Rangitata*, a New Zealand ship that had been converted into a troop ship; there were no cabins, only

¹⁴¹ Maud Margarson was then 20 from Grimsby living in Montreal. Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Mary Richardson nee Hume”.

¹⁴² Barbara Hewitt was seventeen from Grimsby and had been living in Montreal. Ibid.

¹⁴³ Joan Moorhouse was seventeen, had been living in Perth Ontario, and was originally from Bradford. Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ IWM Documents, 15368, “Private Papers of Miss J Ingham”.

¹⁴⁵ Williamson and Sharp eds. *Just a Larger Family*, 331.

dormitories with double rows of bunk beds.¹⁴⁶ Other private evacuees, like those from St. Hilda's School, travelled back in smaller groups rather than all together as they had arrived. In 1943, Dorothy Mason-Jones returned through New York with Jessie Jefferson, another St. Hilda's girl, both aged eighteen.¹⁴⁷ In another convoluted journey, private evacuee Fabian Pease and his sister departed Canada in April 1944, taking three trains, from Halifax, Montreal, and New York, to Philadelphia.¹⁴⁸ There they boarded the *Serpa Pinta* bound for Lisbon. Apart from a stop in the Azores, the journey was boring; upon arrival they had one day in Lisbon before flying overnight on a DC3 to Bristol.

Bill Shaw, his sister, and their cousin, undertook an even lengthier journey home. During the summer holidays of 1942 they spoke with each other and decided to write home, suggesting that they could return to Britain as the risk of invasion had diminished. Upon returning to their respective boarding schools they received the surprise that the coming term would be their last; their parents had agreed to their suggestion. In October 1942, Bill's sister and cousin, both living in Vancouver, took the train to meet him in Montreal, from where they would travel together to Halifax. They were to catch a Royal Navy ship that was returning to Britain, but on arrival their Uncle Ken told them that the ship had been sunk and that he had found temporary accommodation for them (for Bill in a Catholic boys' school and in a convent for the two girls). He subsequently arranged for the girls to stay at Edgehill School and for Bill to stay at King's Collegiate School, both in Windsor, Nova Scotia, to wait for another departure. It was not until June 1943 that they started out on the journey home via New York and then Philadelphia. After staying with a family in Philadelphia for a few days the three embarked on a Portuguese ship for the Atlantic crossing. Upon arrival in Lisbon they were supposed to take a flight to Britain. Yet all flights were cancelled after a KLM civilian aircraft carrying actor Leslie Howard was apparently shot down. The result was that the three were sent to the luxurious Palacio Hotel outside Lisbon for ten days, which provided time for sightseeing, adventure, and plenty of "spy-watching". Eventually they flew to Shannon in Ireland and

¹⁴⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson". Catherine traveled back aboard.

¹⁴⁷ Ancestry, *Boskoop*, June 22, 1943.

¹⁴⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Fabian Pease".

then on to Bristol where they were told they had to wait till nightfall for a train to their home town of Edinburgh. They were told over the tannoy that their parents had actually been waiting for them in London for ten days so they set off for London to meet their parents.

When their ships finally docked at British ports, evacuees were overwhelmed. Despite not wanting to leave Canada, Mary Hume stood with the other evacuees and cried at the first sight of Britain. Just as evacuees had watched Britain fade into the distance when they departed, seeing once again the land which for four or five years had only existed in their minds was a poignant moment. With even more anxiety, evacuees prepared themselves to be reunited with their families, most often at railway stations. Just how that first encounter would occur, however, had the potential to have a life-long impact. As early as December 1939, in a letter to the *British Medical Journal*, the effects that evacuation would bring were pointed out by John Bowlby, British psychologist, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst, and Donald Winnicott, English paediatrician and psychoanalyst - both leaders in their field. Although relating their experience with day nurseries and children's homes, of paramount importance was the fact that "children often fail to recognise their mothers on return home".¹⁴⁹ "When this happens", they argued, "it is found that radical harm has been done". For many families, the separation of almost half a decade and a lack of regular photographs meant that they did not always immediately recognise each other. Anthony Curtis recognised neither his parents nor his siblings upon return and this came as "quite a shock" to him. Not only evacuees who struggled to identify family members; evacuees' parents did so too. When John Macnab and his sister arrived in Glasgow Central Station, it was "to his surprise" that he, rather than his older sister, spotted and recognised their parents on the station platform.¹⁵⁰ In some instances, the failure to identify each other was the result of evacuees growing up. Those who had gone through puberty whilst in Canada had shifted from looking like

¹⁴⁹ Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 12.

¹⁵⁰ Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Macnab".

children to being young adults. Mary Hume's mother failed to recognise her because of her make-up.¹⁵¹ John Haikings' reunion with his parents was "a bittersweet experience". Although they were glad to have him home, and he was pleased to see them again, he hardly recognised them.¹⁵² Whether or not evacuees recognised their parents has become an important memory for evacuees. Joan Ambridge, for instance, boasts that she had no issue recognising her mother stating "I always knew my mum".¹⁵³ For others, the moment is still raw: Bill Shaw recalls that the second of seeing his parents again was filled with "relief, delight, gratitude, and gladness but no great teary scenes".¹⁵⁴ Almost with disappointment, Bill suggests "It should have been an immensely emotional occasion - three years is a long time to be separated at that age - but to be honest I don't remember it being so". It was only when he arrived back at their home in Edinburgh and was greeted "with open arms by Nannie" that there were tears.

From the parents' perspective, this reunion was an equally important moment. Julie Kemp's mother, writing to Julie's foster mother, provides a rare insight into how evacuee parents may have felt about the reunion and how they had to negotiate the situation carefully. Sharing the moment she once again laid eyes on her daughter at the train station, Julie's mother wrote on February 28:

We made our way slowly down the aisle between and suddenly there was Julie sitting on her trunk with her case and satchel beside her, and her eyes on daddy who she had recognised as we came down towards her. Her eyes filled and she looked at me...I had been feeling pretty queer myself, we sat on the trunk and recovered ourselves. Quite soon she was chatting happily and Freddie [Julie's father] went off to the office to get a taxi.¹⁵⁵

She continued "I recognised her right away by the plaits, I can't say that I would have done so otherwise, but after a little while her face was quite familiar. She told me that she

¹⁵¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Mary Richardson nee Hume"

¹⁵² Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Haikings".

¹⁵³ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Joan Ambridge".

¹⁵⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Bill Shaw".

¹⁵⁵ IWM Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

was getting used to mine by then!”¹⁵⁶ Other evacuees had to wait longer for their reunions. Patricia and Colin Cave were not met by their parents. Instead, there was a letter with money waiting for them with instructions to take the train to Bristol with all twelve pieces of their luggage.¹⁵⁷ Tom and Christopher Sharp were met by their father at the dock in Liverpool and were then taken to his home in Manchester for the night.¹⁵⁸ The next day the boys were put on a train to Rochester to join their mother at the school where she was teaching.¹⁵⁹

As evacuees returned to their homes and families in Britain, they not only officially ceased to be “evacuees”, but had to begin their transition and adjustment back to life in Britain. Margaret Hay, Play-Therapist and Social Worker, conducted a study during the war at a Child Guidance Clinic in Buckinghamshire on “Evacuation and the Isolated Child”, arguing that evacuated children would “present a very grave problem in the postwar years”. Hay argued that children’s “emotional immaturity and anti-social behaviour may prove a subtle but disruptive element in the community” and that “isolated children [would] become bad parents...because it is useless to expect that they can give what they do not possess- love, security, values”. Exacerbating this, Hay argued, was that child psychology had not found a satisfactory solution”.¹⁶⁰ Although Hay’s experience lay with domestic evacuees and never mentioned evacuees in Canada, all evacuees returned to this unfair climate. Evacuees were expected to become delinquent, depraved, and disruptive members of British society.

In 1945, Winnicott made a number of radio broadcasts that were to act as advice for the parents of evacuees. In *The Return of the Evacuated Child*, Winnicott explained that

¹⁵⁶ IWM Documents, 8139, “Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp”.

¹⁵⁷ Cave memoir - this clearly really stuck with her as in her memoir she wrote “It puzzled me for years that a parent didn’t come meet us ... but I understand there was no petrol for car journey.

¹⁵⁸ Williamson and Sharp eds. *Just a Larger Family*, 331.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Margaret Hay, “Evacuation and the Isolated Child: A Wartime Phenomenon”, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 16 no 1. (1946): 52-63.

the ability of evacuees to reacclimatise was entirely dependent upon the individual. “At one extreme”, he noted, are the children who will just come home, and settle down easily, and, at the other extreme, there will be children who have settled so well in their foster-homes that the return home order will come as a real shock”. Although this broadcast was seemingly directed mostly at the parents of domestic evacuees, the principles are applicable to overseas evacuees, if not more so because they additionally needed to readjust to their country. While individually focused, an examination of the range of evacuees’ readjustments is useful. The attempts by evacuees to reintegrate immediately upon return will be categorised by space: that of the family, the home, the school, and the public realm. Winnicott argued in his broadcast that the return of evacuated children needed special attention because “careless management at the critical moment can so easily lead to bitterness”.¹⁶¹ Although not shell-shocked like soldiers returning home, evacuees’ separation from home was a significant childhood experience. He further argued, “In not a few cases a child will come home, but will need skilled supervision for a while”.¹⁶² While evacuees had been provided with supervision, healthcare, and education in Canada, upon return evacuees were left to their own devices, or those of their parents, to readjust to British life.

Most importantly, evacuees had to readjust to their family. A cold, awkward, or even jubilant reunion would have set the stage for evacuees’ immediate experience with their families. Many evacuees returned to a family unit that was not quite the same as the one they left. Some evacuees’ fathers were still away serving in the forces by the time they themselves returned to Britain. For others, their family was forever changed with the loss of a father or sibling in action. As there was a backlog of 25,000 divorce cases by 1944 in

¹⁶¹ “The Return of the Evacuated Child” in Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 39. As evacuees started to return to Britain from Canada they indirectly became included in such psychological thinking. Like Freud’s study other wartime studies focused on evacuees and citizens in Britain. Hansi Kennedy, “Children in Conflict: Anna Freud and the War Nurseries”, *The Psychoanalytical Study of the Child* 64 (2009): 306-319.

See M. Burbury, “Effects of Evacuation and Air Raids on City School Children” *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 13 (1943). P.E. Vernon, “Psychological Effects of Air Raids”, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Pathology* 36 (1941).

¹⁶² Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 42.

Britain, some children returned to a broken home.¹⁶³ Although their parents had divorced before the war, Tom and Christopher Sharp on their first night back in Britain had to meet their step-mother for the very first time.¹⁶⁴ Evacuees had to become accustomed to siblings as well, which often brought jealousy, either because they had been allowed to remain in Britain or because new siblings seemingly “replaced” them within the family. Maureen Burke, for example, had a brother who stayed in Britain so she and her sister(s) came to think of him as being terribly spoiled by their parents.¹⁶⁵ While Patricia and Colin Cave were in Canada their parents had had a baby boy in August 1944. Colin did not take well to him and according to Patricia “regarded him as an usurper”.¹⁶⁶ While some evacuees gained younger siblings, John Haikings’ sister passed away while he was in Canada.¹⁶⁷ Extended family members, especially aging grandparents, may also not have survived.

Evacuees had to become familiar again with their remaining family members. In his broadcast Winnicott urged parents to be patient; when mother and child “meet they will have to start from scratch to get to know each other”, he argued. He further noted that over the duration of separation, mother and child altered. This would be particularly true of the child as the years away equated to a significant chunk of a child’s life; “after three years”, he argued, “he is the same person but he has lost whatever characteristics the six-year-old had, because he is now nine”. He suggested parents to take note that “they can be brutally sincere, can children, and coldness can hurt. Given time, on the other hand, feeling can develop in their natural way, and suddenly a mother may be rewarded by a genuine hug that was worth waiting for”.¹⁶⁸ One such mother who intuitively seemed to follow Winnicott’s direction was Julie Kemp’s mother, who witnessed the most ideal situation. Julie’s mother routinely reported Julie’s progress to her foster mother. Julie’s

¹⁶³ Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 18.

¹⁶⁴ Williamson and Sharp eds. *Just a Larger Family*, 331.

¹⁶⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Maureen Burke”.

¹⁶⁶ IWM Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”, *War Guest Memoir*.

¹⁶⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Haikings”.

¹⁶⁸ Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 41.

mother, depicting a blissful return to normal family life, described how they had to readjust to each other noting,

She laughs a great deal at me, and I do at her. I've had a lot of spontaneous hugs and feel quite satisfied at the way things are going. We talk very much of you, but so far I have not dared to ask what she might think of me! I thought she had a terrific accent at first, but now it is quite pretty and includes our 'northern country' or almost Scottish.... She comes into our room at 730 each morning and we watch daddy get dressed, very lazy I'm afraid, he gets his own breakfast and we have to watch the train he goes past in as we get dressed...we are very fortunate that Freddie is about just now, to see so much of Julie. She meets him every evening off the train, usually on the bicycle, though it is a 2 minute trot away".¹⁶⁹

Julie was apparently settling back into her old life just fine. Some parents tried to help their children readjust to life back in Britain.

Other evacuees found it harder to reintegrate into their family lives, mostly because they had grown up in Canada and gained an independence which was not always afforded to them upon return. John Haiking had difficulty coping with his parents' parenting style: "I resumed my life in Yorkshire with two almost-strangers who wanted to exert parental control over me, although I was now 17 and feeling quite independent".¹⁷⁰ According to Winnicott, some evacuees could become frustrated "after being accustomed to a certain treatment".¹⁷¹ After all, evacuees had experienced preferential treatment. Female evacuees returning wearing make-up and stockings certainly became a point of contention; Canada was a bit more liberal than Britain. Although one cannot suggest they had changed beyond recognition, some parents felt estranged from their now make-up wearing, smoking, independent young adults. Some of the evacuees who returned "still as children" avoided this tension, but would then perhaps have faced more feelings of unfamiliarity with their family. This made some evacuees resist their parents' intervention. Upon return, Jean Ingham entered the University of London, however this served only to break down relations with her family. On March 2, 1945 Jean's mother

¹⁶⁹ IWM Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

¹⁷⁰ Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Haikings". CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, John Haikings.

¹⁷¹ "The Deprived Mother" in Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 31.

wrote her a particularly guilt-inducing letter: “I can see that your dad has no control over you now that you’re at university – for I have only received one letter from you in five months. shocking!... You have lost interest in me have you? Don’t you love me any more? Bitter tears roll down my cheeks at the mere thought of the prospect. From Janet”. This soon followed with a letter from Jean’s father who wrote “we are very disappointed and a little anxious at not hearing from you for three weeks. It really is too bad. Perhaps you do not realize how much you are in our thoughts. It was bad enough when you were in Toronto, when we knew we could not have you back, and wondering whether we had done wrong in letting you go. But now when you cannot even send a card it makes us very unhappy”.¹⁷² Winnicott had reminded parents that “when the children come home they are not necessarily going to fall into and fit nicely into the holes they made when they went away, for the simple reason that the hole had disappeared”.¹⁷³

The transition was also hard for parents. As much as they may have wanted to let their children settle back into life, parents also had their own emotional battles to fight. No evacuee parent wished to miss their child’s childhood on purpose, but weighed against the risk of invasion, evacuation was seen as the best option. Although sometimes at the instigation of foster parents, continued contact with their parents would have helped this reintegration, ensuring that parent and child were not entirely foreign to each other. Yet Winnicott also suggests that mothers had to bear the “quiet kitchen adjustment” and transition back from having an empty home to essentially taking up motherhood again.¹⁷⁴ Without judgement, Winnicott suggested that some mothers may have become jealous of their child’s foster mother as it was “maddening if you have been a good mother but you find your child wanting to stay with a woman who is a stranger to you”.¹⁷⁵ Evacuees sharing their experiences with their parents could have also caused upset. Winnicott suggested that foster mothers had to “tread a line throughout the war” as they had to care for the child’s body with food, health, and clothing, but also with

¹⁷² IWM Documents, 15368, “Private Papers of Miss J Ingham”.

¹⁷³ Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 41.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 32.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 35.

love.¹⁷⁶ He encouraged parents to keep in contact with foster parents.¹⁷⁷ Julie Kemp's parents recognised that the transition could be difficult for Julie and her foster mother; after all, their daughter had again been pulled away from someone to whom she had become deeply attached. As a way to avoid severing ties and cutting Julie off entirely from her life in Canada, Julie's parents ensured with sincerity that they kept Canada in Julie's mind. In reply to an airmail letter, Julie's mother wrote that they had read the letter many times. She then explained that Julie was eating and sleeping well, and looking well as they were "very tickled by the fat legs and 'sit-on'". "Her first impressions of England were how tidy it looked and the greenness of the field" she continued. On another occasion, Julie's mother expressed how important it was to keep their link alive:

It so lovely to have her, I wish you hadn't to be missing her at your end. I won't let her forget you, I don't think she will, she has much to thank you for all her life, and so have we. She says she has promised Harpy [foster father] to come back, and that is a promise that will certainly be kept; yesterday she said 'I think mummie would like it here,' I hope that will be put to the proof in the not-too-distant future. Surely you can come? Please ask anything you would like to hear and I will do my best to tell you.¹⁷⁸

Upon their return to Britain, evacuees had to reverse their correspondence for they became separated once again from some homes that they loved. This easily could have led parents to feel inadequate.

To supply an official report of their child's evacuation, but also to help the parents understand their child's experiences over the previous years, CORB evacuees were returned to their parents with a report. Unfortunately these have seemingly been destroyed by CORB and therefore the only surviving copies are those kept by evacuees themselves. Not only did the reports contain a valuable level of detail that surpassed that of the evacuees' case files, but these reports guaranteed that parents had a view of their child's experience. It included the evacuees' personal information, dates of residence in the Dominion, details of their foster parents, and health information. Patricia Silver's

¹⁷⁶ Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 35.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 30.

¹⁷⁸ IWM Documents, 8139, "Private Papers of Miss J M Kemp".

report noted under health: “Pat hospitalized at Souris hospital from Oct 1 1940 to Nov 2nd 1940 because of a fractured femur, slight facial lacerations result from a fall from a swing. Two upper front teeth were knocked out also”. The reports provided an account of Pat’s regular attendance at the United Church Sunday school and explained her education whilst in Canada: “School: Goodlands school, standard grade 5. Age of class 10, place in class HIGH Pat stood first in grade v of 6 pupils with average of 86% general intelligence”. In the subjects of interest category, it was noted that “Pat always has been a good student and had shown good general ability. She has liked school, although she says she does not see why anyone has to take arithmetic”. The general comments section provided overarching thoughts and Pat’s read:

General remarks: Pat has a cheerful, even disposition. She adapts herself easily to different surroundings and people. Throughout her stay here she always has taken a very active part in school. Sunday school and community affairs, singing, reciting etc. Pat likes music. Pat likes Canada and would like to have stayed here. She was well liked in the community and enjoyed a very happy relationship with her foster parents.¹⁷⁹

Signed by M. Crawley, a social worker at the Children’s Aid Society of Western Manitoba, on Oct 25, 1945, the report illustrates that care was taken to help biological parent with the transition. The report may have filled in blank spots for evacuees’ parents, helping them to assist their children with their transition.

Even if “successfully” reunited with their families, evacuees also had to navigate their home or domestic space. Although evacuees were selected from areas that had been targeted or were likely to be the target of air raids, not all evacuees’ homes were damaged. Yet even then, evacuees had to readjust to the new, old space. In a broadcast, Winnicott argued that the time spent away from the home would have a great impact because of evacuees’ emotional development and growth. He declared “even if his home escaped bomb damage, even if it is exactly where he left it, it seems much smaller to him.”¹⁸⁰ Life back in Britain was an adjustment to John Macnab; he recalled entering the

¹⁷⁹ IWM Documents, 15995, “Private Papers of Miss P M Silver”.

¹⁸⁰ Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency*, 41.

close where he had lived in Glasgow and then into his house and thought to himself that it must just be a “stop-over place” until they returned to their “proper home” because “it didn’t bear comparison to what [he] had been used to in Canada”.¹⁸¹ As he had been separated from his sister in Canada, returning meant that they once again became close siblings and this eased his transition back into the domestic sphere. According to John, “The change in lifestyle was huge and the house still cramped but generally it was a happy and pleasant place to be. We were soon a family again”. To become “family again”, however, suggested that they had ceased to be a family. John Haikings did not return to the same house as his parents had moved from Scarborough to Leeds. For John, life was very different upon return particularly because moving to Leeds meant that he had to “find a whole new circle of friends”.¹⁸² War did destroy or damage evacuee homes. Britain’s landscape was already war-torn and vastly different from what evacuees had left behind. Even if just passing through London to their final destination, the landscape of Britain showed its battle scars. Sheila Cooley returned home to find over 300 bombs had fallen within a quarter of a mile of her house and when one had landed next door, her own house had been badly damaged.¹⁸³ The way she navigated the neighbourhood landscape had to change.

Evacuees also had to navigate their way through the space of school. If they had not completed their education in Canada, they had to resume their education in Britain. While evacuees had been ahead in subjects upon arrival in Canada, they returned behind in some subjects because of the different education traditions. *The Education Act of 1944* revolutionised the British education system that made the transition more difficult.¹⁸⁴ Canadian schools however did make an effort to see that credits were transferable.¹⁸⁵ For other evacuees, school became another separation; much to Patricia’s heartbreak, she was immediately sent off to boarding school upon her return. She failed to understand why

¹⁸¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Macnab”.

¹⁸² Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Haikings”.

¹⁸³ IWM Documents, 1750, “Private Papers of Mrs S H Cooley”.

¹⁸⁴ “The Education Act of 1944”, UK Parliament, accessed March 23, 2015. [http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transforming UK Parliament, society/livinglearning/school/overview/educationact1944](http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transforming%20UK%20Parliament/society/livinglearning/school/overview/educationact1944).

¹⁸⁵ UOTA, B1968-0002, “University of Toronto, Women’s War Service Committee”.

her parents would send her away again after so long.¹⁸⁶ As some evacuees had to return to school, older evacuees entered into the workforce. Kathleen Oakley was one who went to work in a factory in Britain.¹⁸⁷ The social space of school would have also been altered during evacuees' absence. June Hickman returned to school, but a number of her schoolmates had been killed in air raids because they lived near the Clydebank where munitions were made and ships maintained.¹⁸⁸ In an effort to help her integrate socially, Mary Hume's mother decided to wake her up on her very first morning back in Britain with a girl standing in her bedroom with her mother. Mary's mother had arranged for Mary and her former local schoolmate to go for a long bike ride, even borrowing a bicycle from a neighbour for Mary.¹⁸⁹

No amount of effort from the parents could, however, overcome the biggest transition evacuees had to make: into the public space, and in particular with their peers. Evacuees had arrived in Canada with an outward appearance that identified them as distinct: the school uniforms, shoes, and even accents. Over time, these outward markers faded as evacuees adopted Canadian clothing and styles. This immediately made them stand out once again. John Haikings, for instance, felt out of place as he wore his Canadian leather jacket upon return. While evacuees were welcomed upon arrival in Canada in 1940, the same hand of welcome was not extended as they returned to Britain. Rather than a purposeful snub, this could be attributed to the return of hundreds of thousands of other evacuees, particularly domestic evacuees, and the fact that Britain was rather preoccupied with reconstruction. Such a welcome would serve no useful purpose. Rather than a party with balloons, on a public scale their homecoming more closely resembled the air coming out of a balloon. Evacuees had also conjured up in their minds an image of "home". Whether that rested on family members, or the physical home, or their town, it may have been that evacuees' images of home were destroyed, or at least altered. This led some evacuees to long to return to their lives in Canada. Evacuees therefore went through a

¹⁸⁶ IWM Documents 10034, "Private Papers of Mrs P Cave".

¹⁸⁷ Author's Evacuee Database, Kathleen Oakley and Violet Scott.

¹⁸⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "June Hickman".

¹⁸⁹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Mary Richardson nee Hume".

transition as their “war guest” status was stripped from them. Not only their outward appearance, but also the cultural education that evacuees received in Canada made them different. Although both had been separated from their families, they differed from domestic evacuees in key respects. Evacuees’ peers now too found them *different*, although not always in a negative way. The worst, however, was that their war guest identity was replaced with that of “bomb dodgers”.¹⁹⁰ Whilst in Canada evacuees had been told to embody British stoicism and were called upon in the public space to symbolise Britain’s strength; upon return, they were cast by their peers as weak, children who ran away. The term “bomb dodgers” implies that children had cheated their way out of paying their dues and experiencing the war in Britain. Rather than fighting alongside Britons, evacuees had fled and therefore were excluded from sharing in Britain’s fight.¹⁹¹ Although an extreme example, while a sixteen-year-old girl named Jean became so afraid of air raids that she did not leave her house for a year, evacuees had spent their time in Canada with no such fears.¹⁹²

Not only had evacuees and their families changed, but so too had Britain. The immediate effects of the war on Britain were apparent as evacuees returned home. As they travelled from port to home, often through London, they first witnessed the destruction of war. Returning brought evacuees as close to a war zone as they had witnessed.¹⁹³ When some returned in 1944, they fell victim to V-1 and V-2 bombs. Dennis Drew returned and found his sister suffering from a nervous breakdown because of the V-bombs. He initially “thought this was quite an adventure but soon learned that the reason we had no windows, doors, or ceilings in our house due to the explosions, wasn’t very funny after all”.¹⁹⁴ While their time in Canada had been peaceful and free

¹⁹⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Anthony Curtis”.

¹⁹¹ For more on debate over the extent that the war was a “People’s War” See Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War?*, 2003.

¹⁹² Ethel Dukes, “The Psychological Effects of War on the Family and its Individual Members” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 16, no 1(1946): 64–73.

¹⁹³ “Explore the London Blitz”, Bomb Sight, accessed June 1, 2015, <http://www.bombsight.org/#15/51.5068/-0.0900>. The website maps all of the bombs that fell on London during the Blitz and enables us to view the extent of the damage in the vicinity to some evacuees’ homes. Overlaying two such maps would reinforce the original idea that evacuation would protect children.

¹⁹⁴ Evacuee Collectin, “Dennis Drew”.

from the dangers of war, upon return, some had to spend time in air-raid shelters. As rationing had become much more stringent since their departure, evacuees also had to become accustomed to “going without”; something they had not had to cope with to the same extent in Canada. Although young evacuees may have been oblivious to economic and political changes, their parents would have paid close attention to the changes that would trickle down and impact their children’s lives. Economically, Britain was strained. Over the course of the war, Britain accumulated over three billion pounds in debt; capital was substantially reduced, and the country’s exports were reduced by two-thirds of the pre-war standards.¹⁹⁵ Perhaps the most significant outcome of the war was the Labour Party’s victory in the 1945 General Election, a landslide win that replaced the war’s hero Winston Churchill with Clement Attlee. After the election, the Labour party adopted many of the reforms outlined in the Beveridge Report (1942). The *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services*, which became known as the Beveridge Report, began to point towards postwar reconstruction with plans for social security “from cradle to grave” to eliminate the five evils –want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness.¹⁹⁶ Postwar Britain was different from the Britain that evacuees had left behind. The whole nation had to endure reconstruction.¹⁹⁷

The reconstruction of Britain parallels evacuees’ efforts to rebuild their lives in Britain. As evacuees tried to settle back into their British lives, Britain continued to live with the consequences of the war three to five years into the postwar period. Compared to their time in Canada, evacuees had to cope with extended rationing on furniture, clothing, petrol, and food. It would not be until 1954 that ration coupons were finally made

¹⁹⁵ Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 20.

¹⁹⁶ Party Andrew Thorpe argues that the war did much to propel the party. Thorpe argues attributes the victory to the working class vote, that voters swung away from the conservatives, and an increase of middle class votes. Paul Addison argues that when Britain’s survival came into question in 1940, a shift occurred; people began working together and the Labour party was able to use its values. Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945* (London: Cape, 1975).

¹⁹⁷ Junichi Hasegawa argues that radicalisation of reconstruction plans were because for the first time, there was the availability of designable urban areas. Junichi Hasegawa, “The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction in 1940s Britain”, *Twentieth Century British History*, 10, no 2 (1992):137-161. Also see Nick Tiratsoo, *Reconstruction, Affluence and Labour Politics* (London: Routledge, 1990) and Junichi Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992).

obsolete.¹⁹⁸ Difficulties in finding employment, housing shortages, and general austerity began to wear on Britons, and did not go unnoticed by evacuees, especially those who were on the cusp of adulthood. Furthermore, smoke, air pollution and smog was worsening and “pea-soupers” were ever more prevalent, peaking with the Great Smog of London in 1952.¹⁹⁹ As the “euphoria of victory” dissipated, Britons came to question why they fought the war; after the personal sacrifices endured in order to win and to some extent because of the deprivation of the Depression, Britons sought a better life.²⁰⁰ Yet in comparison to a dark postwar period in Britain, Canada was an image of light and prosperity. According to Jonathan Vance, “after 1945, the fruits of victory were everywhere” as “Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan had been crushed and Canada could enjoy its time in the sun”. Canadians could enjoy full employment, a flourishing consumer economy, political stability, rising GNP, and the social welfare state.²⁰¹ Some even thought that Canada would offer new opportunities to those bound by class in Britain.²⁰² The postwar period, from 1945 to 1975, therefore saw over four million immigrants arrive in Canada, the large majority coming from Britain.²⁰³ While ordinary Britons had various reasons to immigrate to Canada, because of their evacuation some evacuees found that the country had an additional allure.

Deeply influenced by their time spent in Canada, the difficult conditions in Britain, and for personal and familial reasons, a number of evacuees permanently immigrated to Canada. Because of postwar shortages in transportation, evacuees often spent a couple of years back in Britain. This gave them time to attempt to readjust to family life and consider whether they should return to Canada. Continuing their education was one reason that evacuees returned. Anthony and Jeffrey Curtis returned to Canada in May 1948 as their foster parents asked their parents if they could go back to finish their

¹⁹⁸ Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 20-21. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁹⁹ Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 35.

²⁰⁰ Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 21 and 39.

²⁰¹ Jonathan Vance, “An Open Door to a Better Future” in *Canada and the Second World War* eds. Geoffrey Hayes, Mike Bechtold and Matt Symes, 474.

²⁰² Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 51.

²⁰³ Barber and Watson, *Invisible Immigrants*, 1.

education. Their school principal in Canada agreed that if they could attend summer school they would be able to start grade nine that year with their peers. To get them up to speed, a Miss Brownbridge taught them grade seven and eight in six weeks. By Christmas of 1948, the twins had risen to first and second ranking in their class. That the boys originally arrived at age seven, an important developmental stage, likely also influenced the situation. As they returned to their foster families in Winnipeg, the *Winnipeg Press* reported that in returning, they declared, “Canada is for Us”.²⁰⁴ Similarly, evacuees who had finished their education looked to Canada for employment. Mel Poucher returned to Britain and studied engineering, but returned to Canada to work for Wimpey construction.²⁰⁵ Others like Dennis Drew took up the opportunity to return to Canada for work. Military service was still compulsory in Britain until 1960, delaying evacuees in their return. After Dennis completed his service as an instrument mechanic in the RAF, he took a job at Barclays Bank D.C.O. (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) that required him to spend a period of time at a D.C.O. “outpost”. Instead of going to Africa, Dennis asked if he could return to Canada. Even after a “not too happy experience in Canada”, Dennis decided to return because “there was something about this great country that attracted” him. Upon his return he reconnected with individuals whom he had known from his time in Windsor, Ontario, as an evacuee and eventually found work at Chrysler Corporation in 1955. It was there that Dennis met his wife, “a ‘Canuck’ of English and French ancestry”. Fellow evacuee John Bickley, who had lived next to Dennis in Windsor during the war, returned to Canada to marry a Canadian girl; Dennis acted as his best man and he loaned them his car for their honeymoon.²⁰⁶ In a twist of fate, Catherine Anderson came back to Canada because of her husband’s employment. For Catherine, the return meant “picking up the threads”.²⁰⁷

The postwar austerity in Britain led some evacuees back to Canada in search of better opportunities. Maureen, Winnifred, and Elizabeth Burke all returned to live with their

²⁰⁴ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Anthony Curtis”.

²⁰⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Bob swartman”.

²⁰⁶ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Dennis Drew”.

²⁰⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Catherine Anderson”.

aunt in London, Ontario, in 1948. Maureen returned to her education at St. Anne's Catholic school while Betty took up work at London Life and Winnifred, a job at a law office. After a short period with their aunt, the three sisters found an apartment of their own and became self-supporting.²⁰⁸ Christine Bolus had been permitted to stay in Goderich, Ontario, to complete her last year of high school, but when she finished her foster mother's health was deteriorating. In a role reversal, Christine stayed to care for her and took a secretarial course. By April 1948, her foster mother thought that Christine should return home to decide whether she should stay in Canada permanently and bought her a plane ticket. Upon arrival, Christine "hardly knew [her] parents and was confused with the British 'class' system". As there were four of her family members living in a two-room tenement building, she "knew [she] would be better off living in Canada". After six weeks she "got a flight 'home'" and returned to her foster mother. That her foster mother left Christine her house upon her death illustrates the lasting bond between them.²⁰⁹ Joan Ambridge returned to Canada in 1947, although not to rejoin her aunt in British Columbia. Although her parents were not fond of her decision to return to Canada, Joan was frustrated with England and with postwar austerity and shortages. When she arrived in Toronto she joined the "7000 club", a British club where she met her future husband John who coincidentally had been evacuated from Britain to America.²¹⁰

The foster parents of John Potter were always asking him to return after the war. In 1957 John married Gwen, yet the housing shortage in Britain was so bad that they eventually decided to immigrate to Canada in 1960. John's foster parents sponsored the couple, who landed in Toronto. Because of John's time in Canada, he was familiar with North American appliances and was able to find a job as an appliance repair man.²¹¹ Although often influenced predominantly by promises of employment or in search of

²⁰⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Maureen Burke". Elizabeth "Betty" left in 1951.

²⁰⁹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Christine Bolus". Christine returned to Goderich and then decided to be a teacher and took a course at the Stratford Normal School. She "came 'home' every Friday night on a newspaper van and took the train back on Monday mornings" so she could check on her foster mother, Anne. In the next few years, her foster mother had four strokes and was hospitalized at times. She died in September 1951 just before Christine's 22nd birthday. Christine was "devastated".

²¹⁰ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Joan Ambridge".

²¹¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Gwen Potter". In Britain, John worked at Harrods where he had to deal with American families so he also gained experience that way.

better opportunities, evacuees were also motivated to return to Canada as a result of lasting ties with their foster parents. Like John Potter, Peter Horlock returned to Canada when he and his wife struggled to find a home in Britain. As a Ford Motor employee, Peter was able to transfer back to Windsor, Ontario, where he had lived as a private evacuee under the Ford scheme. Of his return he explained “I considered Canada as my other home after the wonderful loving treatment I was given here”.²¹² Thorlief Rothwell, another private Ford evacuee, also returned to Windsor, Ontario.²¹³ That many evacuees returned to the towns, and sometimes even the homes, of their foster parents illustrates their desire to re-enter the lives they once lived in Canada. For John Haikings, the austerity of postwar Britain became too much in comparison to the life he knew he could be living in Canada. After his military service, John worked in “dark, grimy, industrial Leeds in a factory with no windows” but all he wanted to do was return as he “yearned for the open spaces and fresh air of Nova Scotia”. The physical landscape of Nova Scotia was alluring. John’s bank account in Annapolis Royal with money from all of his jobs while in Canada (like tapping maple trees) gave him a boost while his foster father officially sponsored him. Illustrating his happiness at his decision, of returning to Pier 21 in Halifax he wrote, “this time I was a landed immigrant”.²¹⁴ Fred Kearney felt similarly desirous of returning and kept in touch with his foster parents from the time he left Canada in 1944. In 1951, Fred finally returned to live with the Blackwells where he was “welcomed as a son”.²¹⁵

For Mary Hume, the contrast between life in Canada and Britain was so stark that she had to “pinch herself in the mirror” and became frustrated with the bad conditions. Furthermore, while Mary wanted to train to be a nurse, her mother wanted her to get married and this became a point of contention. Just as Mary had forecasted when she left Stratford, Ontario, she returned in 1947 and rejoined her foster family. It took Mary a year to arrange a passage back to North America. The very same newspaper that wrote

²¹² Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Peter Horlock”.

²¹³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Howard Hughes”.

²¹⁴ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Haikings”.

²¹⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “June Hickman”.

about her departure in 1945 again interviewed her under the title “Guest here during war returns from visits home”. Even after two years, Mary’s imposed wartime identity prevailed as she was still referred to as a “guest”. According to the paper, Mary’s “visit home” had lasted two years. In the lengthy article, Mary stated “I am delighted to be back in Canada”. Despite the fact that the war was over and Mary was no longer an evacuee, the newspaper again used her as a symbol of the war by quizzing her on the conditions of life back in Britain. Illuminating her immediate impressions upon return, the article noted “the most surprising thing that the young woman found in this country was the way in which the commonplace here was a luxury in England”. Mary’s identity as an evacuee persisted and was again used to illuminate life in Britain, just as it was when she arrived seven years earlier. The article closed by noting,

Although occasionally her speech has a slight English ring to it most of the time it sounds pure Canadian. Her parents intend to stay in England she said, and she is not sure whether she will remain here for good. In any event, she intends to stay in her adopted country for quite awhile.²¹⁶

Mary not only had a pure Canadian accent but instead of Canada adopting *her* for the war, she had now adopted Canada. Although no estimate of the number of evacuees who permanently immigrated to Canada after the war can be established, it is clear that evacuees returned to Canada for various reasons. There were still many more like Hazel Curtis and Pam Mace who wanted to return but were prevented by family and personal circumstances.²¹⁷ While evacuees who returned were motivated by factors such as austerity that drove other Britons to immigrate to Canada, evacuees were also motivated by their time spent in Canada and the fact that they could smoothly reintegrate into their old Canadian lives, often with their foster parents. That some evacuees expressed a “pull” and deep connection with Canada reinforces the idea that evacuation would foster long-lasting personal connections. Rejoining their foster homes enabled them to “pick up where they left off”, something that many were unable to do with their family and peers in Britain.

²¹⁶ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Mary Richardson nee Hume”.

²¹⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Pam Mace”. Pam noted “I had always thought I would return to Canada to live - but life has a funny way of dealing with you, and although I went to Toronto in the late 70s, I have never been back to Regina.”

Even if evacuees did not immigrate to Canada, many remained in contact with their foster families. Lesley Knight returned for a visit with her foster parents, and in 1947 they went to Britain to visit her. Until approximately 1989, Lesley's "Aunt Vera and Uncle Bill" wrote her a letter at least once a year.²¹⁸ Over the years, Dorothy and Pam Pye returned several times to visit their foster parents Lloyd and Ruby Miller, such as for their Golden wedding anniversary, and the Millers visited them in England. Pamela had plans to return to Canada permanently, but could not find employment. Instead, the Millers kept in contact "with their girls" through letters and the odd telephone call.²¹⁹ In 1967, Hazel Curtis' parents went to Canada to visit her foster parents, the Mullins, and in 1971 she and her husband returned to Canada to visit them. Even just for temporary stays, that evacuees and foster families remained in contact and still felt strongly enough to visit one another over thirty years later illustrates the deep bond that was formed. Sometimes these connections were passed down through generations.²²⁰ John Potter decided to honour his foster mother Kathleen by naming his own daughter after her. Even when contact with foster parents faded out naturally over the years, evacuees like John Macnab often felt a retrospective sense of disappointment that life became busy and the connection was lost. For many, evacuation forged long-lasting, deep relationships between foster parents and evacuees. Even though evacuation was a wartime measure, the consequences of it are much more enduring. This corroborated the original arguments that evacuation would act as an "Empire builder". Evacuees permanently immigrated to Canada, even if motivated by numerous factors, because their Canadian cultural education caused them to be different from their British peers. Although they were not "running away" from their lives in Britain, some struggled to readjust to life with their family, peers, and their home country. Even years after the war, Canada remained in many evacuees' minds as a safe haven, free from class, social, and parental pressures; the hills, lands, lakes, and mountains called evacuees back. That some refer to Canada as "home" suggests that they had relocated their sense of belonging. Evacuation was a temporary measure to protect Britain's children, but a natural by-product was long lasting

²¹⁸ IWM Interview, 15873, Lesley Knight, 1991.

²¹⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, Dorothy and Pam Pye.

²²⁰ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Joyce Boldero".

relationships with foster parents and connections to the natural and cultural landscape of the nation that had become home.

It is difficult for historians, untrained in psychiatry, to look back on evacuation and estimate rates of trauma. Trauma is a psychological definition, although it is often used synonymously with “effect” or “impact”. Professionals like Peter Heinl, a psychiatrist and psycho-family therapist, have more effectively been able to work with individuals who experienced lasting negative effects from the Second World War. Heinl’s book *Splintered Innocence* (2001) reveals the deep psychological legacy of the war and how it can manifest itself in individuals.²²¹ For instance, he discusses a woman who, whenever thinking about her experience of fleeing Danzig to escape the Nazis in winter, experiences a physical and psychological reaction of feeling an extreme sensation of cold which no amount of heat can reduce. Nicholas Stargardt in *Witnesses of War* argues that “from a historical perspective it is better to restrict the use of ‘trauma’ to extreme cases which cannot be explained in any other way, like a five-year-old Polish girl who had to be taught to speak again after her liberation from a concentration camp”.²²² Rather than attempting to individually and retrospectively psycho-analyse each evacuee, considering their lasting memories of evacuation can reveal what of their experience, overall, stands out in their minds. Some historians use adult-created oral history to uncover “what actually happened” and try to remove the influence of memory. But this *memory*, how individuals remember their experience and choose to represent it, is equally revealing. Rather, how evacuees describe their experience in a short sentence or two becomes a snapshot of their experience and illustrates how they choose to represent it.

Of his experience, Dennis Drew argues “certain memories never really leave you. Even scenes from movies depicting WWII can bring back all sorts of long hidden

²²¹ Peter Heinl, *Splintered Innocence: An Intuitive Approach to Treating War Trauma* (London: Routledge, 2001).

²²² Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 2006), 11.

away happenings”. Even if evacuees did not have a horrible time in Canada, Dennis opts to remind us of the fact that at the root, evacuation separated families: “Children torn from their families, who had to experience frightening times, submarines, depth charges, bombings, a strange new world, was something no child should ever have to live through”.²²³ Other evacuees like June Jolly decided to describe their experience as one of gained opportunities. According to June these included “instruct[ion] in public speaking, health studies, and music and art appreciation” where she “benefited from a much more liberal education than was available to [her] in [her] home country”.²²⁴ Similarly, Bill Shaw felt that the biggest impact of evacuation was that he became “a thoroughly independent little boy”.²²⁵ John Bland estimated that his “Canada experience and ability to look after [himself] served [him] well” noting “I consider my experience in Canada has been a great help in achieving the goals I had set”.²²⁶ Such positive outcomes have given way to gratitude as evacuees recognise that their foster families received no real compensation for the care they provided. Peter Horlock concluded, “I left behind very enduring memories of some wonderful people who I came to love as my own parents”. John Macnab noted that he “could not have wished for a more loving, caring and helpful family with whom to live,” adding “there were good times and [they] have given me memories I shall always have with me. Even though I have been back, I still think and see it in my mind’s eyes as it was all those years ago”.²²⁷ Evacuees do not only see their evacuation in terms of “childcare” but rather as a space for *love*. As the ultimate expression of the legacy of evacuation, Les Oliver suggests, “being evacuated to Canada, was a ‘pivotal part’ of life. I started writing my ‘life story’ from that point on”.²²⁸ For evacuees, evacuation became a fork in the road of life. Although this is a very small sample of evacuees’ recollections, it is important to note that compared to narratives of evacuation from domestic evacuees, there are three memories that are surprisingly absent.

²²³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Dennis Drew”.

²²⁴ “A British Child Guest Remembers”, Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 26, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/29/british-child.html>.

²²⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Bill Shaw”.

²²⁶ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Pam Mace nee Bland”.

²²⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Macnab”.

²²⁸ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”.

Recollections of evacuation in Canada are not plagued by memories of their distribution to foster families like cattle to a market, nor do they have widespread memories of being chosen last or there being a deep clash with “townies”.²²⁹ This is a clear indication that the differences in the planning and facilitation between domestic evacuation and overseas evacuation to Canada did indeed have an impact on evacuees and their experiences. Evacuation was a life-changing experience. For some, it was a change for the better; they experienced a new part of the world, gained a cultural education, and were able to feel love and acceptance in their foster homes. For others, evacuation made their lives more challenging, as they felt a deep sense of separation from their families and/or returned to Britain and struggled to reintegrate into their family, peer, and public life. Wherever on the spectrum an evacuee falls, this does not undermine the emotional pain of being removed from one’s family at a young age. Even if their foster parents gave them a safe, enjoyable experience in Canada, what played in the background for all evacuees was familial separation.

Evacuation also had a lasting legacy more broadly in Britain and in Canada. Because domestic evacuation was an unprecedented mass movement of British people, it became an opportunity for psychological studies of childhood separation and the impact of war on children. Studies such as Susan Isaacs’ *Cambridge Evacuation Survey* and Anna Freud and Dorothy Burlingham’s research at the Hampstead Nursery propelled postwar thinking about child psychology.²³⁰ Donald Winnicott, as previously mentioned, also became an important voice. Perhaps most revolutionary was John Bowlby who published his *Attachment Theory* (1969) which still remains the leading authority in the field. The war suggested that children were better off remaining with their parents, even if they had to endure air-raids, than being separated from their families. This was particularly true for children under five. More recently, the long-term psychological

²²⁹ These themes are frequently present in recollections of evacuees’ in Britain and therefore contribute and have worked to form the narrative of evacuation as a failure and full of sadness and abuse.

²³⁰ Isaacs’ report criticised the ways in which children were prepared for evacuation. Freud found that children seemed to cope better with the bombings than they did with parental separation. Anna Freud, “Infants Without Families: Reports on the Hampstead Nurseries” In *The Writings of Anna Freud* vol 3, (New York: International Universities Press, 1973).

effects of domestic evacuation have been examined in a case study that found that “former evacuees were more likely to have insecure attachment styles and lower levels of present psychological well-being”.²³¹ Evacuation therefore came to be seen as a failure, a social policy which may have caused more harm than good.²³² Yet the war also brought the plight of children into view in terms of national policy. Mathew Thomson in *Lost Freedom* argues that evacuation acted as a “spur to mounting concern about the condition of children, a factor in the case for better healthcare, mental welfare, and social services”.²³³ The passing of the *Children Act* in 1948 pointed towards this new, recognised importance of ensuring children’s safety by establishing childcare departments in local authorities.²³⁴ Children were worthy of full protection under the state. In the past twenty-five years, evacuation has remained an opportunity for study. It has come to be examined not only in terms of childcare, but other effects such as the spread of infectious disease during evacuation and the rise of wartime mortality from childhood leukaemia.²³⁵

All of these studies focus only on context of British domestic evacuation. Even if the presence of evacuees urged some provinces in Canada to improve their childcare services, there are no apparent studies of the impact of overseas evacuation. Canada was not lacking in viable candidates for such studies; Dr. Karl Bernhardt at the Institute of Child Study, with his ad hoc role of providing advice to the University of Toronto committee, could have taken up the opportunity to study evacuees. Also at the Institute of

²³¹ Foster, D, S. Davies, and H. Steele, “The Evacuation of British Children during World War II: A Preliminary Investigation into the Long-Term Psychological Effects”, *Aging & Mental Health* 7 no. 5 (2003): 398-408.

²³² Hansi Kennedy, “Children in Conflict: Anna Freud and the War Nurseries”. *The Psychoanalytical Study of the Child* 64 (2009): 306-319.

²³³ Mathew Thomas, *Lost Freedom*, 49.

²³⁴ “Children and Young Persons Act 1948”, [Legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1963/37/schedule/3/crossheading/the-children-act-1948), “Accessed May 4, 2015.”

²³⁵ Matthew Smallman-Raynor, Cathryn Nettleton and Andrew Cliff, “Wartime Evacuation and the Spread of Infectious Diseases: Epidemiological Consequences of the Dispersal of Children from London during World War II”, *Journal of Historical Geography* 29, vol. 3 (2003): 396-421. The authors argue that evacuation caused an unprecedented population mixing and although vaccinations were used for prevention, evacuees still caught contagious diseases. Also see L. J Kinlen and S.M. John. “Wartime Evacuation and Mortality from Childhood Leukemia in England and Wales in 1945-9,” *British Medical Journal* 309, vol. 6963 (1994): 1197-1202 as the authors argue that wartime evacuation increased incidence of childhood leukemia in rural areas.

Child Study upon the evacuees' arrival was child psychologist and creator of Security Theory, Dr. William Blatz. Rather than conduct a study of evacuees in Canada, Blatz was recruited to Britain to establish the *Birmingham Study*.²³⁶ Although the opportunity was ripe for such leading child psychologists in Canada, there was no direct study, suggesting that in Canada, using "Canada's war guests" as the subjects of study was simply not appropriate. The void can also be attributed to the fact that the British government saw no merit in studying the effects of evacuation on CORB children. In October 1945, CORB suggested a study on how successfully CORB children were able to readjust to British life. The Ministry of Health showed no interest and the Minister of Education wrote that "the value of the survey to [his] department would not justify the work involved".²³⁷ Instead of the lasting effect of evacuation on Canada being the study of such a unique child movement, the impact of the Canada's temporary adoption of Britain's children can be seen in terms of Imperial relations and Canada's place in the British world. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Canada was perceived as a "young nation", needing support and guidance from mother Britain.²³⁸ Canada's role in the First World War worked to change this, finally being recognised as the Dominion of Canada. Historians have pointed to the Second World War as a period where Canada shifted away from the influence of its Imperial mother and towards America, looking to the *Ogdensburg Agreement* and the *Hyde Park Declaration*, 1941 as evidence of Canada's political and economic move towards America.²³⁹ As chapter one illustrates, that thousands of Canadians wholeheartedly opened their homes to British children in 1940 suggests that at least in the early stages of the war, Canadians were not entirely free of their connections to Britain. The presence of evacuees became a part of Canada's wartime landscape and, as a consequence, a key part in Canada's narrative of the war.

²³⁶ See Jocelyn Raymond, "The Nursery Overseas" in *The Nursery World of Dr. Blatz*, (University of Toronto Press, 1991):161-179.

²³⁷ TNA, DO131/70, Dominions Office, "Proposed Investigation Results of CORB".

²³⁸ Shurlee Swaine and Marot Hillel in chapter five "The Salvation of the Race" in *Child, Nation, Race and Empire* argue that young Canada was perceived to need to be "looked after".

²³⁹ See J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's War* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975). For example, the Ogdensburg Agreement was made on August 17, 1940 as the Battle of Britain raged and showed that Britain would no longer be able to militarily protect Canada and therefore the agreement made a mutual defense plan between Canada and the United States.

Even if this piece of history has faded from Canada's social memory of the war, this chapter shows that the legacy of evacuation was not shattered upon the evacuees' return to Britain. Rather, that some evacuees permanently immigrated to Canada and many more remained in contact with their foster families decades after the war proves that evacuation forged important personal and familial connections between Britain and Canada. These connections did not resemble the former mother-child colonial relationship; instead, through evacuation, the imperial family had come together. Following the five years during which evacuees resided in Canada, evacuation carved new connections between Britain and Canada.

Just as evacuees' experiences varied, so too did the experiences of their return and attempts to reintegrate into their families, their social peer groups, and British society. Some evacuees struggled to find a place once again for themselves in the domestic space, private space, or the public space. Part of this was due to their imposed war guest identity being stripped and replaced with that of "bomb dodgers". Evacuees had been identifiably different upon arrival in Canada, but their Britishness was reframed as a quality that made them worthy of Canada's hospitality. Upon return to Britain, they carried a new differentness resulting from their newfound cultural education. However, with time, as Britain struggled through its own postwar austerity, evacuees' identity was not reshaped into something beneficial for them. Even though evacuees had had their own wartime experience, their time spent in Canada prevented them from sharing in the larger narrative of Britain's stoic fight against the Axis. While some experienced extreme strain after being separated from their families for a significant part of their childhood, others were very happy to return and were able to transition back into their lives. The extent to which this depended on their ages is difficult to establish. For instance, some young evacuees felt more connected to their Canadian foster families than the "strangers" in their biological families, but at the same time some young evacuees proved to be resilient. Those who returned to Britain in the prime of their youth when they still had to conform to their biological parents' authority found the transition difficult; they had to weather re-entering their families, reconnecting with their British peers, and navigating

the British school system or finding employment that matched their class, education, and desires. Sometimes this led evacuees to feel a sense of rejection or misplacement within Britain; some felt the allure of Canada so strongly that they permanently immigrated. For many, Canada remained the idyllic image of “home”; their time represented freedom, beautiful landscapes, hospitality, and often love. Something that was intended to be a means to protect Britain’s youngest generation from the horrors of war turned into a fundamental experience that produced life-long legacies. That reintegration into their country (rather than just their homes, like domestic evacuees) has largely been overlooked by contemporary figures in postwar Britain and in the historiography is an oversight. A legacy of the Second World War is the deep bonds that were formed between households in Britain and those in Canada as a result of evacuation.

Conclusion

The experience of evacuation, being sent to a different country to live with strangers or distant relatives and being separated from family, friends, and country during childhood, greatly affected the lives of evacuees. Rather than spending the war in the British countryside or in bomb shelters with their parents, it was through overseas evacuation that these children experienced the war. This was an alternative wartime experience from many of their British or even Canadian peers. While scholarly attention has fallen on the adult civilian, *From Lion to Leaf* illustrates that children were not untouched by the war. The Second World War was not only fought on the battlefield by men or in victory gardens and munitions factories by women, but also on the playground by children. The experience of growing up in wartime during a time of one's fundamental development brings additional, and in some instances more severe and lasting repercussions. In that sense, evacuees share a commonality with other children in conflicts both before and after the Second World War.¹ For evacuees, childhood and evacuation are deeply intertwined. Consequently, evacuation has shaped evacuees' personal narratives not only of the war but of their lives. This has forged the creation of an evacuee identity. While in Canada, evacuees were known as "guest children", a term largely imposed upon them, but which bound evacuees together. Evacuees were aware of their war guest status and knew, through their experiences of selection, transportation, and evacuee gatherings, that they were all British children sojourning to Canada to escape the war. This was common to both CORB and private evacuees. As the children returned home to Britain to attempt to reintegrate into society, an evacuee identity continued to be projected upon them, but this time by Britons. Instead of war guests, they were painted as British children who had run away to Canada to dodge the bombs. As outlined in chapter five, this, together with the prolonged familial separation, led some evacuees to struggle to find their place in Britain following the conclusion of the war. This differentness

¹ James Marten argues that children began to be engaged in war on a mass scale first during the American Civil War. James Marten, *The Children's Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

seemed to persist as time wore on, Britain faced reconstruction, and evacuees grew into adulthood.

In the 1990s, however, a major shift occurred and a revived, shared evacuee identity emerged. Scholars, under the influence of social and cultural trends, began to re-examine the Second World War. Coincidentally, at the same time the population who were children during the war reached the age when they became interested in recording their experiences, often for the sake of their families.² Nicholas Stargardt in *Witnesses of War* (2006) argues that the 1990s was a watershed, as enough time had passed that “they were willing to speak about their experiences”.³ For the sake of posterity, this led to the publication of hordes of memoirs and autobiographies by those who grew up during the Second World War. In 1995 for instance, Patricia Cave published her memoir *War Guest: Recollections of Being Evacuated to Canada in 1940*.⁴ This trend was not limited to evacuees. Perhaps the most important book to emerge was Michael Fethney’s *The Absurd and the Brave*, an institutional history of CORB. This was published in 1990 to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of overseas evacuation.⁵

To commemorate the event, a reunion was held in England at the University of York on August 17 and 18, 1990 for all CORB evacuees.⁶ This allowed evacuees, mostly those still residing in Britain, to come together to share their memories of their CORB

² For instance, John Macnicol, “The Effect of the Evacuation of Schoolchildren on Official Attitudes to State Intervention,” In Harold Smith, ed. *War and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986): 27. Travis L. Crosby, *The Impact of Civilian Evacuation in the Second World War* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 57. Also see Martin Parsons I’ll Take That One, *Dispelling the Myths of Civilian Evacuation*. Carlton Jackson, *Who Will Take Our Children?*, 1985.

³ Stargardt, *Witnesses of War*, 15.

⁴ William Tuttle, *Daddy’s Gone to War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), vii. William Tuttle began his book about American children in the Second World War by stating, “Born in 1937, I was a home front child”. For instance, Patricia Cave, *War Guest: Recollections of Being Evacuated to Canada in 1940*. (1995). IWM Documents 10034, “Private Papers of Mrs P Cave”, Hilda Hollingsworth. *They Tied a Label on my Coat*, 1991, and Alistair Horne, *Bundles from Britain*, 1993.

⁵ It also marked the evacuation of children to Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand but internal evacuation occurred a year earlier in 1939 therefore making 1989 the fiftieth anniversary.

⁶ Evacuees who went to each of the Dominions attended. Madge Wear, for instance, went to South Africa and attended the reunion. TNA, HF/LEEW: 2001.1331.1, “1940-1990”. Patricia Lin, for her research for her article “National Identity and Social Mobility”, distributed questionnaires to CORB evacuees at the 1990 CORB reunion. IWM, Document 1350, “PY Lin Questionnaire”.

evacuation, regardless of the fact that they may have gone to different Dominions. Kenneth Maunder, who as a seven year old boarded the *Volendam*, attended the York reunion despite the fact that he never made it to Canada because his ship was torpedoed. Maunder's CORB number and his very dangerous experience symbolically earned him his evacuee stripes.⁷ Less than a month later, a similar reunion was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, for CORB evacuees who had come to Canada.⁸ On the weekend of September 8, 1990, forty-five evacuees travelled back to Nova Scotia and met for a reunion dinner at the Halifax Hilton Hotel. Reunion events also included a "nostalgic visit to Pier 21, where all but one batch of evacuees landed" and a tour of the Halifax harbour past Pier 21 courtesy of the Canadian Navy.⁹ The evacuees attended a Sunday morning service at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Halifax as part of the reunion. The day's service leaflet offered a "special welcome to Child War Evacuees". The reverse side extended the welcome, noting "We give thanks for the freedom and peace which we enjoy in Canada, and for the contributions which have been made to our society by immigrants, refugees and evacuees, and we pray for them".¹⁰ A few evacuees were able to attend both reunions. For perpetuity, a brass plaque was put on display at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax, Nova Scotia, which read:

Commemorating the arrival in Halifax, Nova Scotia of British children evacuated to Canada during the wartime summer of 1940 and to record their unbounded gratitude for safe conduct, foster homes, love, generosity and understanding in time of need. 50th anniversary, September 1940.¹¹

The plaque was to be on display in the museum next to the scale model of the *Nova Scotia*, one ship that delivered evacuees to Canada.¹² That these reunions happened on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean points towards the emergence of a shared evacuee

⁷ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, Kenneth Maunder.

⁸ "Wartime Foster Children to Reunite", *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, August 28, 1990. Although the article mentions CORB and the context, the title of "foster children" is interesting and perhaps reflects that Canada knew quite little about them after 50 years.

⁹ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, Donald Chandler. "Wartime Foster Children to Reunite", *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, August 28, 1990.

¹⁰ St. Paul's Church Archives, Halifax, Nova Scotia, September 9, 1990 Service Leaflet.

¹¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Les Oliver". CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, Donald Chandler.

¹² The *Nova Scotia* made three journeys to Canada with evacuees: August 6, 1940, October 3, 1940, and December 2, 1940. None of the voyages however, carried CORB evacuees.

identity that was not bound by geography. At both reunions evacuees congregated, reuniting with old friends and meeting other evacuees for the first time. Throughout all of the places and spaces during their time in Canada, evacuees crossed paths. Not only opportunities to search for those lost connections, these reunions became a space for evacuees to gain a sense of shared experiences. That one evacuee went to Australia and another to Canada became inconsequential when discussing the common evacuee experiences of coping with prolonged separation from home and attempting to acclimatize to another part of the Empire. Even the term “reunion” suggested that this was a gathering of those once *unified*, much like a large family reunion.

The impact of these reunions on “former evacuees” cannot be underestimated. In August 1990, Les Oliver travelled to Nova Scotia with his wife to visit her parents and stumbled upon an article on the reunion in the *Halifax Chronicle Herald*. Although he had missed the reunion, Les took the opportunity to write to Donald Chandler, the evacuee in the article. Until then, all Les Oliver knew about his evacuation was his CORB number and that he came to Canada on the *Nerissa*. Les Oliver explained the impact this had: “I felt like a piece of the “CORB jig-saw puzzle” that had fallen out of the box when it was opened when we came to Canada, and somehow I got lost!” Les Oliver had been evacuated to live with his uncle in British Columbia and remained in Canada after the war, causing him to become distanced from the CORB scheme and lose contact with other CORB evacuees. “After 50 years of not knowing anything about CORB” he wrote, “I had a lot of catching up to do, and could finally start to put some of the pieces together”.¹³ Les Oliver was certainly not the only one with such feelings. For instance, when asked whether he was part of this evacuation, John Macnab replied that “he really didn't know”.¹⁴ At the age of five, John Macnab and his eight-year-old sister Emily arrived in Canada as CORB evacuees. His response does not suggest that he was unaware of his evacuation, but rather that even after so many years, he was still unsure

¹³ Author's Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”. This does not mean that Les was unaware of this war guest status. He was still a British boy war guest but he went to live with his uncle in rural British Columbia and became disconnected from CORB is that he was unable to identify or forge a relationship with other evacuees while there.

¹⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, “Kathleen Kristjansson”.

about the conditions and details of his wartime separation from family and country. Although the evacuees lived the experience, many might not have known exactly how it happened, or how evacuation was *supposed* to function. Some evacuee parents may have never shared these details with their children, leaving it entirely up to the evacuees themselves, at some time in their life, to search for “answers”. There will still be many evacuees who either by choice or circumstance, have never attended an evacuee reunion or reconnected with anyone from their time in Canada.

These reunions serve the purpose of reconnecting evacuees or reuniting evacuees with the CORB program. Although these events may trigger sad memories, it may have been cathartic for some evacuees to find out that others had similar thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This explains why a subsequent evacuee reunion was organised in Halifax in September 2000 for the sixtieth anniversary of evacuation. This time, the reunion was organised by Margaret Smolensky who was living in Toronto, with the help of John Haikings, who was still living in Nova Scotia.¹⁵ This time Les Oliver made sure to attend. In total, twenty-eight evacuees attended the reunion that started with a Friday evening “meet and greet” where, according to Les Oliver, they could “compare notes and exchange memories”. Dinner at the Hotel Nova Scotian, a tour of Pier 21, and a service at St. Paul’s Anglican Church followed. The service poignantly marked exactly sixty years since the tragic sinking of the *City of Benares*; the evacuees remembered those who perished and gave thanks for their own safe arrival. Although smaller in numbers, this reunion similarly enabled evacuees to forge new and important connections with each other. After the 2000 reunion, Les Oliver ended up on Margaret Smolensky’s list of CORB evacuees. Evidently, Smolensky passed the list to Ken Humphrey who had been evacuated to South Africa, who then noticed that both he and Les Oliver were from Coulsdon.¹⁶ Through subsequent correspondence, it emerged that Ken and Les had in fact both attended the same school in Coulsdon before they left England and further, Ken

¹⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”. CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, Margaret Smolenski nee Beal. Margaret states that she submitted file in 2008 so would likely have been aware of the upcoming anniversary and perhaps decided to organise another reunion.

¹⁶ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”.

knew Beryl Maisiey who had sailed with Les aboard the *Nerissa*.¹⁷ Not only have Ken and Les remained in correspondence, but such cases demonstrate the great extent to which evacuees are interwoven. Reconnecting with other evacuees uncovered important memories of evacuation. Les Oliver wrote to Beryl Maisiey to explain that when he left the CORB group in Vancouver he lost contact with “anything related to the evacuees”, but that “one thing [he did] remember was that [she] was one of the last to say good bye to [him] when he left the CORB group for [his] new home in the Canadian Rockies”. To this Beryl replied, “I remember saying goodbye to you, and shortly after was put on a ship sailing up the coast to Ocean Falls, BC”.¹⁸ Even after so many years, they shared memories of such prominent moments as leaving for their foster homes. Through such reunions, Maureen Burke made contact with Gordon Smith in 2002; they had travelled to Canada together aboard the *Anselm*.¹⁹ Maureen had also been able to contact other fellow “shipmates” Stan and Maisie Goat.²⁰ Gordon also sent photos of some of the evacuees at the sixtieth anniversary reunion, including one of Jean Feliksaik. Jean not only also travelled on the *Anselm*, but was CORB number 75, just two numbers before Maureen. In a letter to Maureen, Jean unintentionally revealed a long-lasting consequence of her Canadian cultural education, explaining that her handwriting was “pure hybrid English and Canadian”.²¹

In 2001, another Canadian reunion was held for the twenty-five evacuees who had stayed in Prince Edward Island and their Canadian host families. Seven PEI evacuees and an additional eighty people attended a reception held at the residence of the Lieutenant

¹⁷ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Maureen Burke”.

²⁰ Maureen came with her two sisters, Elizabeth and Winnifred. Gordon came with his brother Ronald, and Maisie and Stanley Goat had also come with their brother Ron (who later changed his surname to Grant).

²¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Maureen Burke”. Jean Feliksaik nee Hadfield was from Middlesbrough, noted in Fethney as age ten in records but she says she was eight and a half (born December, 1931). Also she notes she “found it intriguing that I am CORB #75, just 2 numbers before you”. Jean also commented in the note.

Governor of PEI.²² This was followed in 2005 with a sixty-fifth reunion dinner in Toronto, attended mostly by those in Ontario. Evacuees wore labels with their name, hometown, CORB number, and the name of their ship. Although this may have been intended to simply act as an icebreaker, it symbolised a desire to re-enact their evacuation and curiously suggested that the evacuees were still happy to be identified in that way. Where they were residing, what they had done or who they had become throughout their lives was insignificant. The seventieth anniversary of evacuation in 2010 was again marked with a reunion in Halifax. This time, at least nine evacuees attended a lunch at the Nova Scotian Hotel and a tour of Pier 21, during which each evacuee received a picture of the ship upon which they arrived.²³ Les Oliver purchased a brick on the Sobey Wall of Honour, intended to “honour all those who set foot on Canadian soil through Pier 21”.²⁴ September 2015 will mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of their arrival in Canada and the sinking of the *City of Benares* which halted overseas evacuation. These reunions have reconnected evacuees, many of whom had not had any kind of contact since the war. That their paths might not have ever crossed either during or after the war becomes wholly irrelevant; it is the shared identity and experience of being an evacuee which makes them feel like part of the same “club”. Their evacuee identity gives them the ability to gain admittance into the evacuee network, within which they feel as if they know one other despite the lack of a personal connection.

The result is that if one is able to contact one evacuee, it usually opens up access to a network of other evacuees. For instance, Mary Richardson, who currently lives in London, Ontario, submitted her own evacuee narrative, but also noted her connection to Les Oliver who in turn, had been in correspondence with Jean Feliksaik. Mary had also

²² Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”. Dinner was held at the Officer’s club on Havilland St where approximately seventy people attended and were served PEI mussels and lobster as a reminder of their PEI days. There was also a Sunday morning remembrance service held at St. Peter’s Cathedral.

²³ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Haikings”. CORB reunion 2010 list included Ray Yole (CORB 47), Peter Rowlands (CORB 57), Maisie Lugar nee Goat (CORB 62), Maggie Smolensky (CORB 1008), Dorothy Hynes (CORB 1351), George Thompson (CORB 1796), Betty Waterfield (CORB 1800), John Hughes (CORB 1824), John Freeman-Marsh (CORB 1825), Dorothy Long (CORB 1881), Les Oliver (CORB 3222), and John Haikings (CORB 3247). These twelve evacuees came on six different boats: *Anselm*, *Antonia*, *Oronsay*, *Duchess of York*, *Nerissa*, and *Nova Scotia*. They hailed from Middlesbrough, Scarborough, Dagenham, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Wallsend, York, and Coulsdon.

²⁴ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”. Les’s brick is located on column 20, row 11.

been contact with Hazel Curtis until her death, at which time her daughter Joyce Boldero in England took up the correspondence. In a twist of fate, Jill Williams, living in Canada, wrote to explain that her cousin was married to Jeffrey Curtis, one of Hazel Curtis' younger brothers. The enquiries from two sides of the same family, on both sides of the Atlantic, demonstrate the transnational legacy of this evacuation. Neither Joyce Boldero nor Jill Williams were aware that the other had written in. Just as Les Oliver (British Columbia) had been in contact with Jean Feliksaik (Manitoba), so too had Maureen Burke (Ontario) despite them living thousands of miles apart.

As part of this evacuee identity, many former evacuees have kept documents and memorabilia associated with their evacuation. Les Oliver has a full collection of CORB labels which he wore on the boat to Canada, including his ID tag, his baggage tag, and two others that possibly identified him as being sent to British Columbia and going to a nominated home.²⁵ It was not only CORB evacuees who treasured such items. Much to her disappointment, in recent years Catherine Anderson had her house broken into and thieves stole her ID tags.²⁶ When evacuees no longer have such mementos, they are able to submit an application for a certificate of recognition for Second World War evacuees from *The Evacuees Reunion Association*.²⁷ The process allows individuals to self-identify as evacuees by providing only their name, hometown and host destination. However, it permanently "recognises" their evacuee identity/status.²⁸ Whether through reunions, social networks, mementos, or evacuation certificates, many evacuees ascribe to a shared evacuee identity.²⁹ Even if former private evacuees cannot attend CORB reunions, they are nevertheless able to share in the evacuee identity. Private evacuee groups such as the children who came through the Ford Motor Company have maintained, like CORB, their

²⁵ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Les Oliver".

²⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Catherine Anderson".

²⁷ A minimum donation is required. There seems to be no authentication process. The names of each person receiving a certificate are added to a main register that will be available for viewing at the National Arboretum. "Certificate of Recognition", *The Evacuees' Reunion Association*, accessed May 15, 2015. <http://www.evacuees.org.uk/links/form.pdf>

²⁸ This certificate is the same for domestic and overseas evacuees as the *ERA* makes no distinction in their certificates. Les Oliver has obtained one.

²⁹ There will be some who choose not to, perhaps because of negative experiences and therefore want to cut off from the whole thing.

own sub-evacuee identity.³⁰ Private evacuees should not be excluded from this evacuee identity; both private and CORB evacuees shared the common experience of prolonged separation from family and country.

Over the decades, this evacuee identity has also survived in the minds of Canadians who grew up alongside Canada's "war guests". Most often, Canadian children remember evacuees from public spaces such as school.³¹ Peter Smith, for instance, remembered twins William and Horace Fox joining his class in 1941. Captured for eternity in the public space, the twins appear in his 1942 class photo, symbolically placed in front of their teacher Edith Alexander. Peter Smith noted "the war meant little to us in a personal sense"; the addition of evacuees to Canadian classrooms made the war "more real" for Canadian children.³² Although never in the same class, Alan Mills was able to recall Douglas and James Bain who attended his school in Windsor, Ontario. Alan recalls that "they were characters and certainly had an impact on the school yard"; "they were tough" and they "excelled at the physical school yard games like British Bulldog and Red Rover".³³ In contrast, Bruce Dodd remembers attending the University of Toronto Schools (UTS), an independent school in Toronto, with Paul Bacon, a private evacuee. Dodd remembers Paul Bacon being different from his Canadian peers: "he came from Winchester School, which, he let us know, was firmly in the upper crust of British public schools. He was a pleasant enough guy but, not being in the jock clique, not a social leader".³⁴ Still using the term "war guest", Lois Davidson recalled "a very good friend who was a war guest".³⁵

³⁰ "We Remember: Safe Haven", Walkerville Times Magazine, accessed March 20, 2015. <http://www.walkervilletimes.com/39/safe-haven.html>.

³¹ Canadian children refers to those who although are now adults, were children in the war.

³² Peter Smith found this placement to be quizzical and suggests that as placement next to girls only became a "prime placement" later on in their adolescence, Miss Alexander may have suggested the boys stand close to her, symbolising their special status. Peter Smith also contacted other schoolmates, one of which remembered the twins' fair hair and sharp facial features. Author's Evacuee Collection, "Peter Smith".

³³ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Judith Spring". For Bernard Spring, Brian was not only an evacuee but was a "terrific soccer player" noting "he could play soccer with a vengeance".

³⁴ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Bruce Dodd". Although not in the same class at Greenway School in Winnipeg, June Hickman remembered Mildred Hunter from Chelmsford, Essex because they were partnered to compete in Royal Life Saving Society competitions. Robert Halfyard spent his adolescent

Both CORB and private evacuees remain in Canadian's wartime memories. Jacqui Krech grew up in Windsor, Ontario, and recalled Ford Motor Company evacuees: "they were always called 'English Guests'...The English Guests had a special status and I remember them with great fondness". Not only do evacuees appear in Jacqui's class photo, but Jacqui recalls special events with evacuees like a skating party at the President of Ford, Mr. Campbell's house. Sometimes these evacuees gained an even more special status. Jacqui recalled "There was also a boy named Michael that I had a crush on way back then. I know I have a picture of three boys together but I cut out Michael's head to wear in my locket sometime in my elementary school days so he remains headless in my scrapbook". The extent to which these memories of evacuees are intertwined with the Canadians' childhood memories of growing up is clear, as Jacqui continued, "I think that was the night I took a shine to Michael because he skated with me☺." Although Jacqui had forgotten Michael's surname, by consulting the database, he was identified as Ford evacuee Michael Wightman.³⁶

These childhood friendships were often maintained long after the evacuees had left Canada. Jacqui Krech kept in touch with Anne Gibbon after she returned with her sister Rosemary to Pinner, England. Although they eventually lost touch, Jacqui still has a picture Anne sent to her and notes "on the back it says 'Rosemary and I at a holiday in 1947. The background is the sea.' They are sitting on a rugged stonewall with the sea in the background". Anne's annotation on the back shows that she felt she needed to explain

years in Barrie, Ontario and wrote to share his memories of Phyllis and Brain Proctor, two evacuees from York who were living in his neighbourhood, and Dennis Virtue from Edinburgh who attended the same church. Author's Evacuee Collection, "June Hickman", "Robert Halfyard".

³⁵ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Lois Davidson". Lois explained that they became friends once Lois moved to Peterborough in 1942. Although Judith French transferred to the Bishop Strachan School in Toronto when they reached grade seven, they remained friends until Judith returned to England.

³⁶ Jacqui Krech also recalled that "the children at Mr. Campbell's did not enjoy the same freedom as we did. I think they were supervised more strictly than we were and couldn't go out to play like we did...I also remember talking to one of the guests over the fence...he was far back in the corner of the garden and I felt then as I do now; he was not allowed off the property while I was free to go places such as Willistead Park and Willistead Library on my own. The park and library were across from the Campbell home on Richmond Street". Author's Evacuee Collection, "Jacqui Krech".

the seaside setting because this would be unfamiliar to Jacqui. By doing so, Anne reveals her understanding of the differences in landscape between Canada and Britain. Jacqui's added note that she "cut the sides off the photo so it would fit in [her] wallet" demonstrates that even two years after Anne's departure, the photo was something worth cherishing and carrying with her every day.³⁷ Even when evacuees and their Canadian friends lost contact over the years, the evacuees' identity still survives in the childhood mementos belonging to Canadian children. Margaret Vance remembered Eva Stevenson, an evacuee from Stoctford, Lancashire, who lived a few blocks away in Hamilton, Ontario and attended W.H. Ballard Public School. Encapsulated in Margaret Vance's 1942 autograph book is a birthday wish from Eva. On another page, Eva Stevenson wrote a playful rhyme, "In the middle of your heart place me a juicy tart".³⁸ Someone had added at the bottom, "37A now 28A" which suggested that Eva had joined Margaret's class. Eva, like many evacuees, must have been moved up a grade to be with her intellectual peers. The evacuees' presence in Canada was captured in these keepsakes which were crafted for posterity. Thousands of similar mementos that connected Canadian children and evacuees will still be in existence in family collections across the country.

Just as evacuees have their own social network, Canadians who grew up during the war also have their own network of those who remember Canada's "guest children". Ellen Hackett remembered living near an evacuee named Marjorie in the 1950s in Lachine, Quebec. After Ellen contacted a former neighbour who provided a bit more information, and consulting the database, it was confirmed that the girl was Marjorie Balls who had gone back to Britain, but later returned to Canada to live with her foster parents, the Shepherds.³⁹ Similarly, Margaret Vance inquired with a university friend Peggy Butler as to whether she remembered any evacuees from growing up in Hamilton, Ontario. This revealed a number of connections; the parents of Peggy Butler's husband

³⁷ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Jacqui Krech".

³⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Margaret Vance".

³⁹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Ellen Hackett". Other memories emerge from evacuees' later lives. Bob swartman for instance knew that Mel Poucher had been a private evacuee and worked at UWO Faculty of engineering

Tony Butler temporarily housed their niece Elizabeth Platts (nee Copeland Watts) as an evacuee although she eventually moved to relatives in America.⁴⁰ Tony Butler's father was a teacher at Hillfield School, a private boys' school in Hamilton, which saw a few British children join the school, including Patrick Barrington. The Butlers remain in contact with Patrick Barrington who still lives in England. Patrick Barrington had traveled on the *Duchess of Atholl* with his mother Katherine, his brother Nicolas and his mother's friend Muriel Adamson and her two sons, Richard and Anthony, and therefore fall just beyond the purview of this study.⁴¹ Patrick Barrington explained that private evacuee Elizabeth Ann Conyers (known as Ann) who was listed as traveling with St. Hilda's school, ended up living with them in Hamilton after something went wrong with her foster parents.⁴² Patrick and Ann stayed in touch until 1996, while Patrick and Anthony Adamson remain in contact today.⁴³ Moreover, the *Duchess of Atholl's* passenger list reveals that they travelled with the Byron House group of private evacuees. Patrick's mother Katherine was a medical doctor and a Quaker and was also listed as the doctor accompanying the Byron House group on their Atlantic voyage. Patrick Barrington revealed that his mother and Lenora Hooper, the Headmistress of Bryon House who brought the children to Ottawa, were friends. The idea was that Katherine Barrington would escort her children to Canada and return to Britain, and that Muriel Adamson, a good family friend of the Barringtons, would care for Patrick and his brother whilst in Canada. This case not only illustrates the personal connections working behind the scenes during evacuation, but as Byron House was one of the first groups of private evacuees to arrive in Canada and one of the most prominent collections at the Imperial

⁴⁰ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Peggy Butler". Elizabeth Platts came to Canada for a short while before going to America to live with her Mother's sister and family. Elizabeth was evacuated because they "were a Quaker family and there were reports circulating that Hitler wanted to use Quaker children as breeding stock for his Aryan race and my American Aunt urged Mother to send us". Even if these rumours were untrue, it demonstrates the fears that led parents to send their children so far away. Elizabeth Platts nee Copeland Watts is listed on the Canadian immigration statistics despite the arrangement that they would ultimately settle in America.

⁴¹ Evacuee Collectino, Patrick Barrington.

⁴² Author's Evacuee Database. Ann attended Strathallan, the girls' school that is now part of Hillfield Strathallan College. <http://www.hsc.on.ca/>

⁴³ Elizabeth Ann Conyers was featured in the film *A Rough Crossing* and spoke about her negative experience before moving to Hamilton.

War Museum, this research, and evacuation, can come full circle. From a single enquiry from Margaret Vance emerge the stories of no less than seven British children and many deep, and often confusing, evacuation connections. This is only one example of how these networks of evacuees and those who remember them have survived.

The influx of these evacuees into Canadian homes also had a lasting impact on Canadian foster families. Although evacuees' foster parents have now passed, some foster siblings felt compelled to record their story, illustrating that hosting an evacuee was an important part of their own lives and had become part of their families' historical narratives. Peggy Mackey's family offered a home to fourteen-year-old Marjorie Everard in Westmount, Quebec; she stayed with the Hill family until her departure in August 1944.⁴⁴ Peggy Mackey noted that "Midge" fit in very well and, with a Canadian reference to Anne of Green Gables, said that the two of them were "like kindred spirits". Years after the war, Marjorie and her husband visited them in Ottawa and one of their daughters even stayed with Marjorie for a few weeks. Although Marjorie now lives in Australia, Peggy explained, "I am still in close contact with Marjorie –we have been best friends all these years...we email back and forth often".⁴⁵ Roger Harris, whose mother took in David Simister, shared many memories of the happy times they spent together in Port Credit, Ontario. With their birthdays a mere twenty days apart, the boys were "more like brothers" and they kept in touch throughout David's RCAF career. Roger visited David and his family when he was stationed in Greenwood, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Ottawa, and Trenton. Roger came to be referred to as "uncle Roger" by David's children. Sadly, David passed away in early 2014 but as Roger explained, he "was able to spend 3 days with him in hospital just before he died". Illustrating the deep foster sibling relationships forged during war that survived over seven decades, Roger Harris ended his letter stating, "Sorry, I have to go. Recalling these moments is getting painful. I really miss my Bud!!!"⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Author's Evacuee Database.

⁴⁵ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Peggy Mackey nee Hill".

⁴⁶ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Roger Harris".

The legacy and lasting connections forged by the evacuation have even been carried into the second generation of evacuee families and Canadian foster families. After his immigration to Canada, John Potter and his foster parents, the Lochheads, remained close despite them living in Vancouver and John living in London, Ontario. As John and his wife Gwen Potter started a family, this relationship carried on and the Lochheads came to consider themselves the children's grandparents.⁴⁷ When John Potter passed away in 1990, his foster mother Kathleen Lochhead wrote a letter to his three daughters. The condolences letter illustrates that the *longue durée* of evacuation had come to include John's daughters. She passed on her condolences and explained "I loved your father too – he was our little boy from age six to eleven. I think I felt closer to him than I have ever felt to another person". Sharing a memory of their father, Kathleen Lochhead wrote that John had a wonderful time with other boys, "mostly play[ing] 'war' and John whittled their guns". She then recalled a Halloween during which John wanted to go as Robin Hood. She wrote "I said I didn't know what Robin Hood looked like so he drew me a picture. Then we dyed old under-wear and did a lot of pinning & sewing. John designed the hat". John chose a character familiar to him but one that was unfamiliar to his foster mother. Kathleen Lochhead closed the letter, "So much fun and so long ago. With love, 'Grandma'".⁴⁸ John's passing and Kathleen's letter came fifty years after his arrival in Canada, but time had left Kathleen's feelings unchanged. John's foster and biological families became one.

Reverend George and Kay McMullen opened their home to private evacuees David and Effie Paterson. David subsequently went to live with Reverend George's brother and sister-in-law. According to Janet McMullen, David, who still lives in Edinburgh, "became a much loved member of the family and to this day still corresponds with the family here". Over the years, both families traveled back and forth across the Atlantic to

⁴⁷ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Gwen Potter".

⁴⁸ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Gwen Potter".

attend weddings, birthdays, and other occasions. Even after seventy-five years, “the bond remains strong”, Janet McMullen concludes.⁴⁹

The memory of evacuation has become entrenched in some family histories, filtering down several generations. John Hughes’ grandparents took in John and Mary Sibun, two private evacuees. The children fit in so well with the family that John Sibun became the godfather to John’s sister when she was born in 1942 and Mary became godmother to John’s brother Terry when he was born in 1944.⁵⁰ Similarly, Kathleen Kristjansson wrote that her grandparents Charles and Elizabeth Powles took in five-year-old John Macnab from Glasgow. “They grew very fond of him and spoke of him for years after”, Kristjansson wrote, adding, “unfortunately, although my Grandfather lived almost until age 94, he had lost touch with John and his family”.⁵¹ Jeff MacLean’s great-grandparents, the Falkners, took Peter and Joan Warren into their home in Verdun, Quebec.⁵² Jeff MacLean’s grandfather is still alive and remembered Peter and Joan staying with his family. Jeff Maclean also sent a photo of a letter of thanks sent to Canadian foster parents from the Queen which, he added, “is hung in [his] childhood bedroom, and it is definitely cherished as a family heirloom.”⁵³ The letter as a sign of the role of foster parents to evacuees has become something so special to the family that it is passed down through the family with the greatest importance attached to it. The legacy of being a foster parent to evacuees, as “war service” or because of the cherished memories and lasting relationships over the decades and across generations, has come to form a part of the history of Canadian families. Evacuation clearly had a lasting impact on Canadian children and Canadian foster families, yet this Canadian perspective on the legacy of evacuation is overlooked in evacuee literature.

⁴⁹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Janet McMullen”.

⁵⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Hughes”.

⁵¹ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Kathleen Kristjansson”.

⁵² Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Jeff MacLean”. Joan and Peter had a brother Clifford who also came to Canada but stayed with another foster family.

⁵³ Ornately decorated letter of thanks were sent to foster parents and were signed by Queen Elizabeth (The Queen Mother). For another example see CWM, 20030249-002, “Certificate of thanks from Buckingham Palace, Aileen Thornbury”.

Some foster families kept in touch with evacuees, while others lost touch over the decades. As evacuees continued on with their lives, links to their evacuation sometimes came by chance. In 2006, Fabian Pease had what he described as “a curious coincidence” when he was visiting a rural ski lodge in British Columbia.⁵⁴ A young couple managed the lodge; the wife turned out to be the daughter of the niece of Fabian’s foster parents, the Bells. He had remembered playing with the Bells’ niece in Halifax all those years ago. This coincidental meeting led Fabian Pease to return to Chester, Nova Scotia, while on a trip to Prince Edward Island later that year. He even returned to the two houses where he and his sister Dora lived and took photos. His sister Dora still has similar pictures taken during their evacuation, so when put together the two sets provide a unique “now” and “then”.⁵⁵ This desire to return to their foster homes is shared by other evacuees, particularly those who had pleasant memories of their time in Canada.

These coincidences led some evacuees to retrace their lives in Canada. Over the years, John Macnab and his wife would talk about his evacuation and how they should take a holiday in Canada and try to reconnect with his foster parents, the Powles. While wandering London, England, one day they decided to go into Canada House in Trafalgar Square to ask about Lac Lu, the lake near Winnipeg where John summered with the Powles, because John’s family apparently “would never believe [him] that such a place existed other than in [his] imagination”. After confirming its location, John decided to finally book the holiday and came across a webpage for “Roy’s Lac Lu Camp”. After writing a letter, when John rung the camp, the man on the other end of the phone explained that his wife knew the Powles after living in the area for years. John’s letter was then walked over to the Powles’ cabin and as John recalls, “although I was unaware of this connection being made at Lac Lu, the jigsaw of reunion had been started”. One day, an email arrived in his inbox; John wrote “after almost 50 years of silence, contact had been re-established by Mr. Powles’s Great Granddaughter”.⁵⁶ At the Winnipeg airport, John and his wife were greeted by Kathleen Kristjansson, the oldest daughter of

⁵⁴ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Fabian Pease”.

⁵⁵ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Fabian Pease”.

⁵⁶ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “John Manab”.

John's foster brother Ted.⁵⁷ The next day, Kathleen took John back to the Ross Avenue house where he once lived with the Powles. He wrote, "I was home again! There was 1569 almost as I had left it. It still had its unique Curb profile roof". Whilst remembering where his ice rink was in the backyard, a lady across the road inquired as to their presence at the house. As Kathleen explained that John lived there fifty years earlier, the lady asked for his last name, peering at him and then said "not Jack Macnab? We were in the same grade at school".⁵⁸ John wrote "I was speechless! The lady, Eileen Kenzick, was overcome with emotion. She said she had never been able to understand why Jack was there one day and then just disappeared. She added that we had both sat next to each other at the front of the class."⁵⁹

Then, finally, came John's long-awaited return to Lac Lu. The first evening they looked through Mr. Powles's old photograph album, and John explained the oddity, "I was able to identify 'me' in photographs not seen before". The next day they went to look at the Powles' cabin and John wrote "Looking out the front window, which I had done for so long as a child, I questioned the position of the cabin. It didn't seem to be the same". Even after fifty years, John was able to tell that the cabin had indeed been jacked up and slightly repositioned. That night Kathleen served up a blueberry pie, something that John had not tasted since leaving Canada". Of saying goodbye to his reunited foster family, John wrote "The phrase that sticks in my mind was said by Barrie; 'kinda sad'. I was not overjoyed at the thought of leaving Canada again. The adventure was over, but the memories will live with us forever".⁶⁰ Of the reunion, Kathleen Kristjansson noted "it is to all of our deep regret that Grandpa lost track of John's whereabouts, and didn't get to see him again, because Grandpa was very fond of John. He admitted to me once he

⁵⁷ At dinner that night John and his wife were joined with Ted' youngest daughters and their children. John wrote of the night "There were lots of stories to be told and pictures to be viewed. It was a memorable evening during which all the missing years just disappeared. Contact would never again be lost". Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Macnab".

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "John Macnab". The next day they visited Mr. Powles' youngest brother, "Uncle Irvine". After a visit to his house, "Uncle Irvine" gave them "one of his hand-made teapot stands which now sits in pride of place on our kitchen windowsill".

⁶⁰ Ibid.

secretly wished John wouldn't have to go back to Scotland".⁶¹ Mr. Powles passed away only a few years before John and the family were reunited. It was John's longing to return to Lac Lu's beautiful landscape that set him on this path. John's return to Canada finally took him back to places that had, for over fifty years, only existed in his imagination, and reunited him with those he had known in the war and the next generation of his foster family. Such reunions and pilgrimages back to Canada could have happened to more evacuees than will ever be known.

Over the years, many evacuees have returned to Pier 21 to retrace their first steps on Canadian soil.⁶² John Bailey returned to Canada in 2008 for the first time since the war and visited Pier 21, also participating in an oral interview for the British Child Evacuee Collection. For Bailey, the trip was solely about returning to Canada; unlike John Macnab, he did not want to visit the places he lived and frequented during the war. He justifies this decision, stating "I can still remember them here [presumably pointing to this head] and I don't want to go along and see that this little country lane is now the middle of a city somewhere. I've got to hold my memories in my head."⁶³ John's fear that his memories of halcyon days would be shattered by returning and finding something different, illustrates his strong desire and efforts to preserve and protect pleasant memories. For some evacuees, a tumultuous experience in Canada could have come to an end when they returned to Britain but for others, a positive experience in Canada made leaving forever difficult. For many, returning to Canada or making a pilgrimage back to the places they once lived decades earlier during their childhood provided closure.

From Lion to Leaf shows that what began as a philanthropic effort to provide safe shelter for Britain's children for the duration of the war, turned into something much

⁶¹ Author's Evacuee Collection, "Kathleen Kristjansson".

⁶² Even if they did not come through Halifax, like Catherine Anderson's ship that arrived in Montreal, visiting Pier 21 is another opportunity for evacuees to learn more about evacuation. The staff at the museum's Scotiabank Family History Centre help evacuees to find the ship they came to Canada on and often provide information on CORB.⁶² Evacuees also have the opportunity to contribute their written memories or oral interviews to the British Child Evacuee Collection.

⁶³ CMI, British Evacuee Child Collection, 08-06-03JPB- John Patrick Bailey, interview, 2008.

more powerful. The plight of Britain's children captured the hearts and minds of thousands of Canadians from coast to coast. While European refugee children were turned away by Canada, British children were the ideal guests; they were ethnically similar and part of the Imperial family. While Canadians were motivated to help the cause because of personal, political, and Imperial connections to Britain, Canada in fact retained significant authority throughout the organisation of the evacuation. Canadians enthusiastically called for the arrival of evacuees with patriotic and Imperial sentiment rather than Britain calling on her Dominions in her hour of need. Throughout the planning of evacuation and selection of evacuees, Canada exercised its authority to select the *right* kind of evacuees. The ways that evacuees experienced evacuation, particularly their journey to Canada, illustrates their desire to exercise agency and form their own narrative as historical agents. The conceptualisation of evacuees' experiences in the private and public space enables a close view of how evacuation functioned, differed from domestic evacuation, and served to benefit and protect evacuees. Evacuees were provided with the best care Canada had to offer, reflecting Canada's perception that Britain's evacuees were worthy. This close care, in terms of their physical and emotional health as well as the choice of foster homes, was fundamentally different than that of domestic evacuation, and this accounts for the differences in the respective evacuees' experiences. The importance that politicians, the public, and individual families placed on evacuees led to their imposed identity as "Canada's war guests", a title in which the nation symbolically claimed them as their own. As a result of their place in the public space, evacuees gained a cultural education by interacting with Canadians; they gained an understanding of Canadian language, culture, and landscape, and even adopted Canadian fashion styles.

As the war's end drew closer, some evacuees returned to Britain to be reunited with their families, to enlist, or to take up war work. The majority of evacuees remained in Canada until 1945. Upon return, some evacuees struggled to reintegrate into their families, peer groups, and society as a whole. Because of postwar austerity, particularly when set against Canada's relative prosperity, family circumstances, and, most importantly, the personal relationships forged during their evacuation and their deep sense of love for their surrogate nation, some evacuees permanently immigrated to

Canada. Whether in their minds they held an image of an idyllic Canada or were plagued by the separation from family, evacuation had a lasting impact. Although one cannot say that every evacuee in Canada had a pleasant experience, evacuation as a temporary wartime measure became a defining part of their lives. While the legacy of domestic evacuation in Britain is one of abuse, class tensions, and social issues, the legacy of Canada's wartime contribution of harboring Britain's children should be one of a nation that did its best to provide the highest level of care while feting its "guests".⁶⁴ Evacuation changed evacuees' lives, leading to lasting relationships between evacuees and their foster families, postwar immigration, and continued fond memories and adoration of Canada. In the early debates over evacuation, it was argued that sending children overseas would reinforce the fabric of the Empire; on individual and personal levels, evacuation wholly succeeded on this front.

Domestic evacuation has dominated the memory of British children in the war. Cementing this memory will be a proposed memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.⁶⁵ The project is the product of the *Evacuees Reunion Association* which, according to their website, is "in the process of fundraising". The proposed memorial spans approximately 11 meters and will include the figures of eleven children of various heights; the association notes, "the memorial portrays a group of confused children as they would have appeared on Evacuation day". The association continues:

This memorial is not simply a memorial to the evacuated children but all those involved in the evacuation process i.e. the train drivers, teachers, nurses, billeting offices, and of course, the foster parents. It is intended to portray the greatest family and social upheaval ever experienced in the long

⁶⁴ Mathew Thomson in his chapter "Shadow of War" argues that domestic evacuation has "exposed a fault-line in the good-war narrative". Thomson, "Shadow of War", 51.

⁶⁵ "All Memorials", National Memorial Arboretum, accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.thenma.org.uk/>

history of our country, a unique, never to be repeated, part of British history.⁶⁶

Although the memorial includes children sent overseas under the guise of the broad “evacuee identity”, at the same time the description of the children leaving on “Evacuation day” by default excludes the evacuees who left home in 1940. Canadian evacuees may also not identify with the negativity that this wording connotes. This is not intended to suggest, however, that evacuees who came to Canada will not identify with this memorial. They may have little option. Similarly, in 2009 a reunion service held at St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, England, to mark the seventieth anniversary of Operation Pied Piper. Curiously, although this was not the anniversary for evacuees who went to the Dominions, according to the *Evacuee Reunion Association* many from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States also attended.⁶⁷ Because of the lack of any CORB-specific reunions after the 1990 York reunion, surviving CORB or private evacuees have had to meld into the domestic evacuation group.

Les Oliver noted that at one of the reunions in Halifax, a CORB evacuee brought two Royal Doulton figurines for “show and tell”.⁶⁸ With a price tag of £99.50 each, the two figurines ‘The boy evacuee’ and ‘the girl evacuee’ were produced by Britain’s famous ceramic and pottery company that had been granted a Royal Warrant in 1901 by King Edward VII.⁶⁹ The advertisement stated the figures “commemorat[ed] The Children of the Blitz” as “hours before war was officially declared on 3 September 1939, the evacuees were already on the move”. The sculptor researched evacuation to “enable him to capture the feelings of the time in this historically accurate figure”, leading him to depict the boy evacuee wearing a green sweater and short trousers with one sock half

⁶⁶ Funds are not coming from the government. This is a self-motivated project. The sculpture was designed by the eminent sculptor Maurice Blik. The description also asks: “If you would like to make a donation or can help with our appeal, please contact the ERA office”. “News: The National Memorial to the Evacuation”, The Evacuees Reunion Association, accessed June 1, 2015.
<http://www.evacuees.org.uk/news.html>.

⁶⁷ “News: The National Memorial to the Evacuation”, The Evacuees Reunion Association, accessed June 1, 2015.

⁶⁸ Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”.

⁶⁹ This was a limited edition of 9,500, hand painted fine china figure created by sculpture Adrian Hughes. “200 Years of Royal Doulton”, Royal Doulton, accessed March 12, 2015.
<http://www.royaldoulton.co.uk/royal-doulton-story>.

dropped down. The boy stands with his suitcase, label around his neck, and a “brown paper parcel tied up with string”. “But above all”, the advertisement notes, “the face of a young boy trying his best to be grown up, although his bottom lip is beginning to tremble, speaks for every evacuee of the Second World War”.⁷⁰ Such an image works to continue the portrayal of the sad, downcast evacuee and attempts to allow this to speak for both domestic and overseas evacuees. It goes without saying that the parting of evacuees, whether destined for the countryside or the Dominions, would have been an unpleasant moment, but the figure overlooks the stark differences in the experiences of evacuees. It is also true that, by bringing it to the Halifax reunion, the evacuee felt some connection to the figure. This may, however, point more towards the fact that overseas evacuees have not been given the same public outlet for their memory to come forward because the national consciousness has muted and overshadowed their experiences. Overseas evacuees have to identify with domestic evacuees because there are few other options.

In 1998, a television movie remake of the children’s book *Goodnight Mister Tom*, about a shy boy evacuee sent to live with an old man with whom he ultimately forms a friendship, was released in Britain.⁷¹ The book by Michelle Magorian, originally published in 1981, won the *Guardian’s Children’s Fiction* prize in 1982 and was later adapted as a stage play.⁷² At much the same time, Richard Nelson wrote and directed the stage play “Goodnight Children Everywhere”, a story of four siblings in London in 1945 after one, seventeen-year old Peter, returns home after being evacuated to Alberta. Nelson attempts to depict the complexities of the return of evacuees and family reintegration in the postwar period. He scripts Peter, who left as a boy and has returned a young, handsome man, as falling into an incestuous relationship with his sister Ann. In comparison, *Goodnight Mister Tom* reinforces the prominence of the domestic evacuee narrative. On the other hand, *Goodnight Children Everywhere*, as one of the only times the Canadian evacuee experience has been utilised by popular culture, has distorted and

⁷⁰ Author’s Evacuee Collection, “Les Oliver”. Royal Doulton Advertisement for “The Boy Evacuee”.

⁷¹ *Goodnight, Mister Tom*, Written by Brian Finch, (1988; Carlton Television), Television.

⁷² “Guardian Children’s Fiction Prize Relaunched”, The Guardian, accessed May 3, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/mar/12/guardianchildrensfictionprize2001.guardianchildrensfictionprize>.

twisted the narrative to create a stark, sensational story of “transgressive sexual acts” between “sibling-strangers”.⁷³ This bold artistic license sours the Canadian evacuee narrative. Nicola McCartney’s stage show *Lifeboat* which opened in Scotland in 2002, approaches the Canadian evacuee narrative through a story about Bess Walder and Beth Cummings who both survived the sinking of the *City of Benares*. Although the ship was on the journey to Canada, the play rather tells the story of how the girls “spent 19 terrifying hours in the water on an upturned lifeboat”.⁷⁴ Cheating death in the Atlantic forms their evacuee experience, rather than spending four to five years in Canada. The best work to illuminate the evacuee experience in Canada is Kit Pearson’s *The Guests of War* trilogy. These public representations cannot speak for all evacuees’ experiences and still do not do enough to remind us of Canada’s “war guests”.

From *Lion to Leaf* opened with scenes from British films that illustrate the children evacuated to the countryside that draw on popular memory of the war. As this study ends, the problem remains that not only are overseas evacuees overshadowed, but the temporary influx of British children to Canada during the war has largely been omitted from the nation’s national consciousness. This is despite the lasting impact that evacuation had on not only evacuees, but also their Canadian foster families and Canadian children who spent some of their childhood with these “guests”. Evacuation has come to form a part of the family histories of those who were evacuees themselves or those who hosted evacuees, and has been passed down through generations. As 2015 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of evacuees’ arrival in Canada, some evacuees are still with us, and the lasting relationships forged in the war are still carefully cultivated and deeply cherished.

⁷³ *Goodnight Children Everywhere*, Directed by Richard Nelson, Stage Theatre.

⁷⁴ *Lifeboat*, Written by Nicola McCartney, Directed by Gill Robertson, Stage Theatre, 2015 Tour. <http://www.catherinewheels.co.uk/productions/Lifeboat>. The show has just returned to Canada with four shows, April 19 and 20 at the Fredericton Playhouse, and April 21 and 22 at the Imperial Theatre, both in New Brunswick.

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Allan Cairnie

Donald Stephen Chandler

Jean Morton nee Cheyne

Marjorie Coates nee Bateson

David Cornish

Peter W Clarke

Jean Hadfield Feliksiak

Marion Freedman

Margaret R. Stanley Goat

Laila Goodman nee Nardell

Gordon & David Hope

Thomasina Howell nee Cook

John Hughes

Anne Jeffery nee MacKinnon

Malcolm S Joyce

Daphne Levy nee Nardell

Kenneth Maunder
 John McKean
 Josephine Mence nee Robson
 Jean Muriel Pitt
 Dorothy Pye
 Catherine Read nee MacKinnon
 Mary Richardson nee Hume
 Judith Ann Rothwell nee Diamond
 Audrey Scholes nee Buxton
 Bill Sims
 Margaret Smolenski nee Beal
 Richard Thomas
 Rob and William Walker
 Margaret Watson nee Seagrief
 John Whenray
 Douglas Wilde

Interviews

Edward Adams
 John Patrick Bradley
 Vicik deKleer nee Scaramanga
 Arienne Downs nee Derue
 Thelma Freedman
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John Anderton (US Evacuee)

Catherine Anderson (Private, Ford Motor Company)

Patrick Barrington (Private)

Elizabeth Ann Conyers (Private, St. Hilda's)

Lenora Williams (Private, Headmistress, Byron House)

Pam Mace nee Bland (CORB 1278)

John Bland (CORB 1277)

Joyce Boldero

Hazel Curtis (CORB 1168)

Muriel Curtis (CORB 1169)

Fred Curtis (CORB 1170)

Anthony Curtis (CORB 1171)

Jeffrey Curtis (CORB 1172)
Christine Bolus nee Leishman (CORB 3855)
 Archibald Leishman (CORB 3854)
Peggy Butler
Maureen Burke (CORB 77)
 Winnifred Burke (CORB 76)
 Elizabeth Burke (CORB 78)
Anthony Curtis (CORB)
Lois Davidson
 Vincent Holman (City of Benares)
 Judith French
Frances Devereaux
 Rufus Foster
Bruce Dodd
 Paul Bacon (Private)
Dennis Drew (Private, Ford Motor Company)
 Jean Drew (Private, Ford Motor Company)
 John Bickley (Private, Ford Motor Company)
 Sue Bickley (Private, Ford Motor Company)
Esther Gilbert
 Sir Martin Gilbert (Private)
Ellen Hackett
 Marjorie Balls (CORB 721)
John Haikings (CORB 3247)
Robert Halfyard
 Phyllis Proctor (CORB 1076)
 Brian Proctor (CORB 1077)
 Dennis Virtue (CORB 3670)
 Peter John Stokes (Private)
Roger Harris
 David John Simister (private)
June Hickman
 Frederick Kearney (CORB 3678)

James Kearney (CORB 3677)

Mildred Hunter (CORB 1174)

Agnes Hunter (CORB 1173)

Peter Horlock (Private, Ford Motor Company)

John Hugh

John Sibun (Private)

Mary Sibun (Private)

Nancy Korn

Jacqui Krech

Anne Gibbons (Private, Ford Motor Company)

Rosemary Gibbons (Private, Ford Motor Company)

Liam Duncan (Private, Ford Motor Company)

Michael Wightman (Private, Ford Motor Company)

Kathleen Kristjansson

John Macnab (CORB 3656)

Emily Macnab (CORB 3655)

Janet McMullen

David Paterson (Private)

Effie Paterson (Private)

Ann Milling

Tom Whitley (CORB 1705)

Raymond Whitley (CORB 1706)

Sheila Whitley (CORB 1707)

Ida Whitley (CORB 1708)

Alan Mills

Agnes Bain (CORB 3644)

Dorothy Bain (CORB 3645)

Douglas Bain (CORB 3646)

James Bain (CORB 3647)

Mary Bain (CORB 3648)

Jeff MacLean

Peter Warren (CORB1496)

Joan Warren (CORB 1498)

Clifford Warren (CORB 1497)
Peggy Mackey Nee Hill
Marjorie May Everard (CORB 702)
Ronald Henry Everard (CORB 701)
Les Oliver (CORB 3222)
Jennifer O'Rourke
Davene Foxley
Fabian Pease (Private)
Dora Pease (Private)
Richenda Pease (Private)
Philomena Guilleband (Private)
Elizabeth Platts nee Copeland Watts (Private)
John Watts (Private)
Gwen Potter
John Potter (CORB 1970)
Linda Quiney
Adrienne Deru (CORB 1221)
June Deru (CORB 1222)
Yvonne Deru (CORB 1223)
Ada Deru (CORB 1224)
Susan Quinn (same evacuees as above)
Mary Richardson Nee Hume (CORB 740)
Drew Robertson
Dorothy May Mason-Jones
Bill Shaw (Private)
Kathleen Shaw (Private)
Diana Simister
Peter Smith
Horace and William Fox (CORB
Jennifer Stephen
Nordra Jean Stephen (nee King) (CORB 1472)
Billy King (CORB 1473)
Judith Spring

Brain Thornton (Private)

Bob Swartman

Mellor Poucher (Private)

Margaret Vance

Eva Stevenson (CORB 1661)

Jill Williams

Author's Evacuee Database

Includes 1,532 CORB children and 1,657 Private Children.

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Short forms

Archives of Ontario – AO

Canadian War Museum – CWM

Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 – CMI

City of Toronto Archives –COTA

Elgin County Archives – ECA
 Halifax Municipal Archives – HMA
 Havergal College Archives – HCA
 Imperial War Museum – IWM
 Library and Archives Canada –LAC
 Mass Observation – MO
 National Archives – NAT
 Nova Scotia Archives – NSA
 Saskatoon Public Library – SPL
 University of Toronto Archive – UOTA
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Appendices

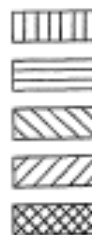
Figure 1: Billeting Accommodation upon Outbreak of War

Source - J. Anderson, 'Report of the Committee on Evacuation' (Cmnd 5837, 1938), p. 38.



The above map shows how one-third of the population of the under-mentioned industrial centres might be evacuated to the neighbouring areas and housed on the *slim clearance standard* (1 person to 1 room).

- 1,500,200 persons from London and Middlesex to be evacuated to the area shaded
- 130,300 persons from Newcastle and Gateshead to be evacuated to the area shaded
- 515,700 persons from Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield and Hull to be evacuated to the area shaded
- 611,400 persons from Liverpool, Bootle, Manchester and Salford to be evacuated to the area shaded
- 320,700 persons from Birmingham to be evacuated to the area shaded



The area left white would be available for further requirements. The dotted areas represent some of the places which might be evacuated or be considered unsuitable for receiving refugees.

Figure 2: Chronological List of Ships Carrying Evacuees to Canada

Source –Library and Archives Canada, RG 26, vol 16, Immigration Branch, Statistical Tabulations

Chronological List of Ships Carrying Private and CORB Evacuees

Total: 47 ships arrived between June and December, 1940, 4 arrived in 1941.

Distribution: 8 CORB ships (not including *Benares*), 39 Private ships, 3 Ships Carrying CORB and Private Children.

*Numbers in brackets signify ships that made numerous journeys.

Listed by: Ship, Port of arrival, Date of arrival.

Duchess of Bedford, (1) Quebec, June 2, 1940

Duchess of Richmond, (1) Quebec, June 10, 1940

Antonia, Quebec, (1) June 11, 1940

Europa, (1) Montreal, June 17, 1940

Duchess of Bedford, (2) Quebec, July 2, 1940

Duchess of Atholl, (1) Quebec, July 4, 1940

Scythia, Halifax, July 5, 1940

Duchess of Richmond, (2) Quebec July 6, 1940

Batory, Halifax, July 12, 1940

Monarch of Bermuda, Halifax, July 12, 1940

Eastern Prince, Halifax, July 14, 1940

Pacific Pioneer, St. John, July 18, 1940

Baltrover, Halifax, July 19, 1940

Antonia, (2) Quebec, July 19, 1940

Torr Head, (1) Montreal, July 26, 1940

Duchess of Bedford, (3) Quebec, July 29, 1940

Duchess of Atholl, (2) Quebec, July 29, 1940

Nerissa, Halifax, July 31, 1940

Duchess of Richmond, (3) Quebec, July 31, 1940

Anselm, August 2 (**CORB**)

Kenbane Head, Montreal, August 3, 1940

Nova Scotia, Halifax, August 6, 1940

Western Prince, Halifax, August 7, 1940

Hilary, August 16 (**CORB**)

Duchess of York, Halifax, August 19, 1940 (**CORB**)

Europa, (2) Montreal, August 19, 1940

Georgie, Halifax, August 19, 1940

Antonia, (3) August 19 (**CORB**)

Oronsay, August 19 (**CORB**)

Newfoundland, Halifax, August 23, 1940 (**CORB**)

Antonia, (4) Quebec, August 23, 1940

Duchess of Atholl, (3) Quebec, August 23, 1940

Bajano, August 24 (**CORB**)

Dunoff Head, Montreal, August 30, 1940

Cornerbrook, Halifax, August 31, 1940

Duchess of Richmond, (4) Halifax, September 6, 1940

Nerissa, Halifax, September 20, 1940 (**CORB**)

Duchess of Atholl, Halifax, September 20, 1940 (and arrival in Quebec September 22, 1940)

Torr Head, (2) Montreal, September 29, 1940

Nova Scotia, (2) Halifax, October 3, 1940

Duchess of Richmond, (5) Halifax, October 5, 1940 (and arrival in Quebec October 7, 1940)

Europa, 3 Montreal, October 23, 1940

Duchess of Richmond, (6) Quebec, November 9, 1940

Baltrover, (2) Halifax, November 10, 1940

Nerissa, (2) Halifax, November 14, 1940

Samaria, Halifax, November 17, 1940

Nova Scotia, Halifax, December 2, 1940

Warwick Castle, St. John, January 24, 1941

Brittanic, Halifax, May 26, 1941

Stratheden, Halifax, September 24, 1941

Figure 3: CORB Provincial Distribution

Source – Database (Compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110)

CORB	1,532
PEI	25
New Brunswick	31
Saskatchewan	102
Alberta	107
Quebec	136
Nova Scotia	145
Manitoba	167
British Columbia	207
Ontario	607
Unlisted	5

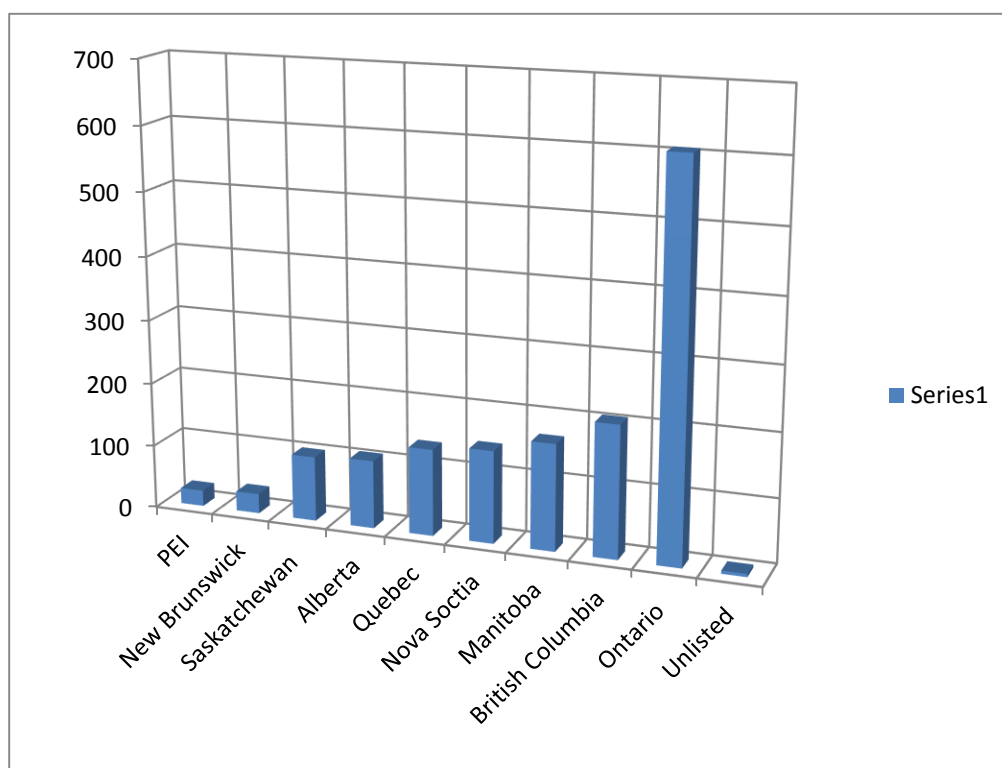


Figure 4: Evacuee Arrivals by Province (Fair Share)

Source – Database (compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110)

	1939 Pop. (Canada Yearbook)	% share <i>Cdn pop.</i>	Actual Arrivals	% share	Location Quotient	Pop. per evacuee
ON	3 752 000	33.2	607	39.6	1.19	6181
BC	774 000	6.8	207	13.5	1.98	3739
MB	727 000	6.4	167	10.9	1.70	4353
NS	554 000	4.9	145	9.5	1.94	3820
QC	3 210 000	28.4	136	8.9	0.31	23602
AB	789 000	7.0	107	7.0	1.00	7374
SK	949 000	8.4	102	6.7	0.80	9304
NB	451 000	4.0	31	2.0	0.50	14548
PE	95 000	0.8	25	1.6	2.00	3800
<i>No province listed</i>			5			
Total	11 315 000		1532			7386

This chart considers whether each province took their “fair share” of evacuees. “An equal response” or “fair share” can be described as consistency between the percentage share of evacuees received by province and the percentage share of Canada’s population in each province.

This can clearly be seen in a Location Quotient $\frac{\% \text{ share of evacuees in province}}{\% \text{ share of population in province}}$

A Location Quotient of 1 indicates a fair share.

A Location Quotient of >1 indicates a concentration

A Location Quotient of <1 indicates under-representation

Therefore, marked concentrations are seen in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and PEI. Ontario also received more than its fair share, but not to the same extent as the former. There was significant under-representation in Quebec and New Brunswick

Figure 5: Origins of CORB Evacuees

Source – Database (compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110)

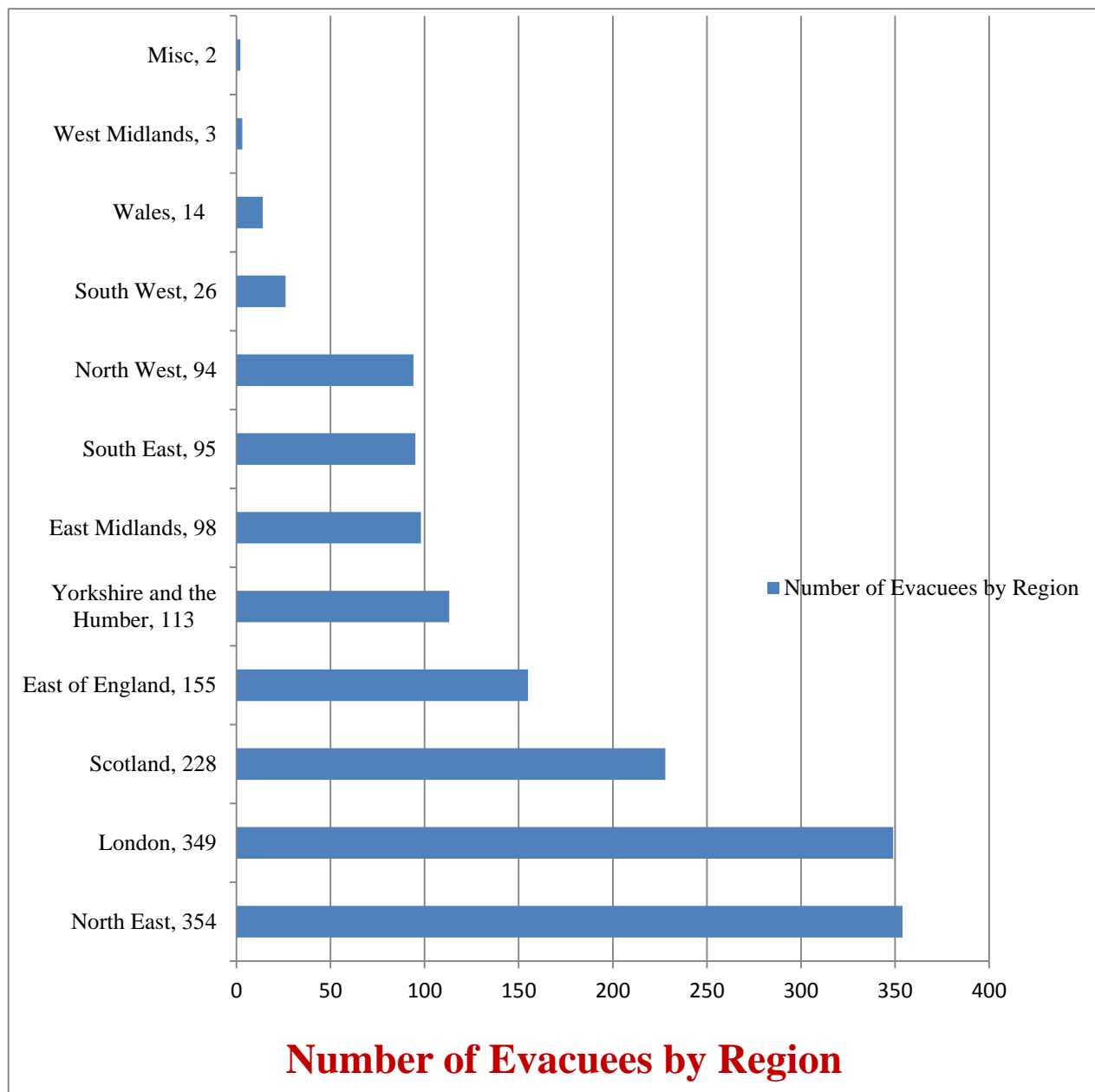


Figure 6: Britain Divided by Region

Source – “The Development and Role of the Regions”, Parliament, www.parliament.uk, accessed May 23, 2015.



Figure 7: Origin of CORB Evacuees in Scotland

Source – Database (compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110).

Map produced with Google Maps. (All red dots represent a town or home from which evacuees originated rather than singular evacuees. Thus, each dot may represent numerous evacuees).



Figure 8: Origin of CORB Evacuees in Northern Scotland (including Lerwick)

Source – Database (Compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110),
Map produced with Google Maps.

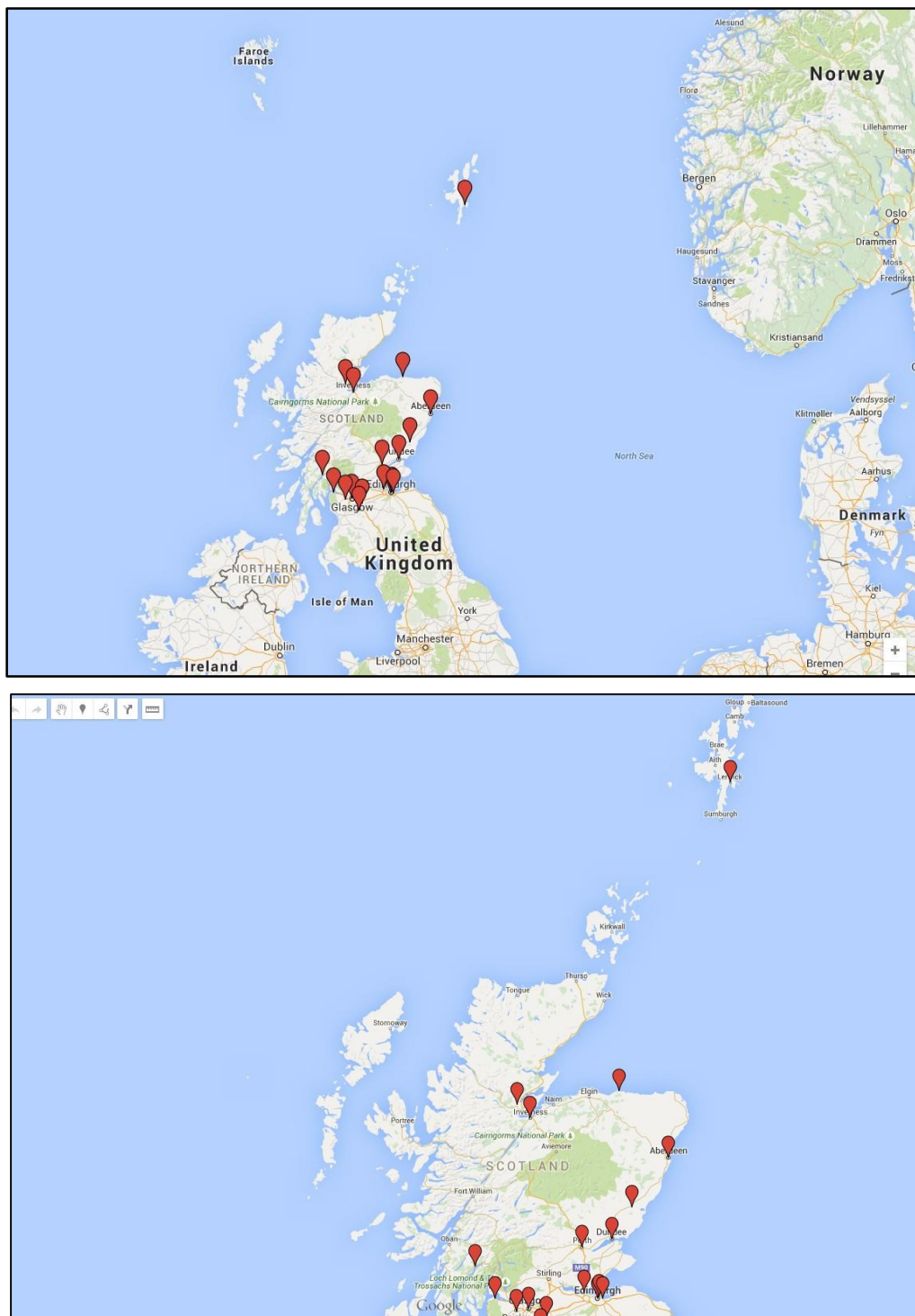


Figure 9: Origin of CORB Evacuees in South East England

Source: Database (Compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110),
Map produced with Google Maps.

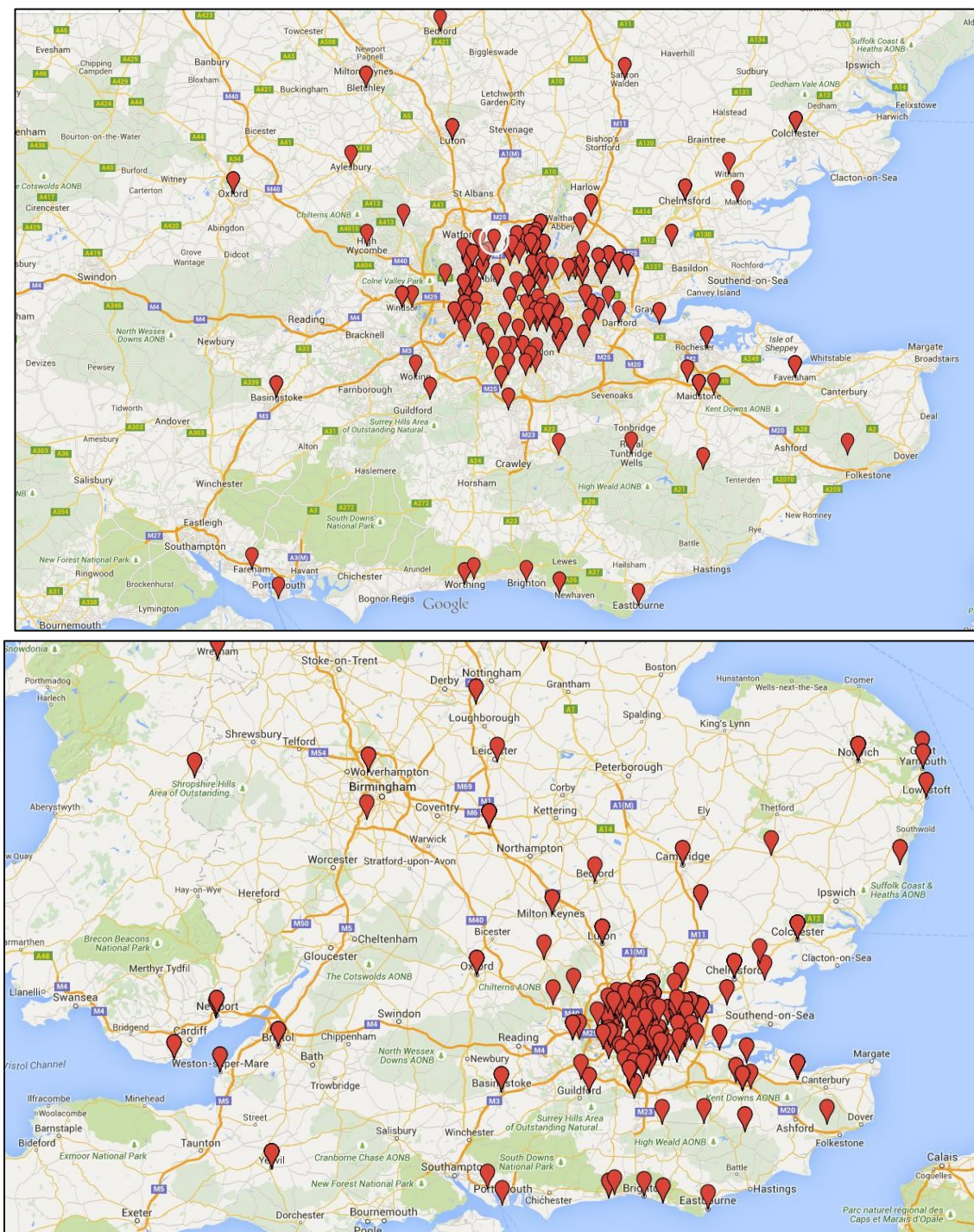
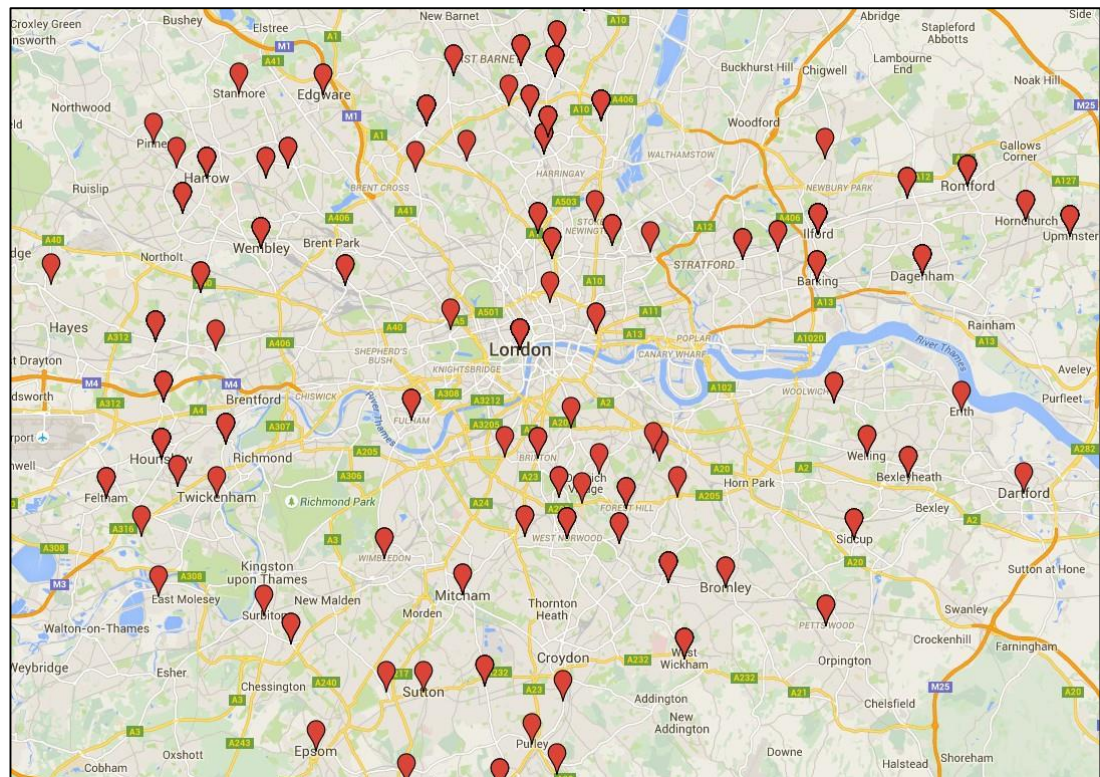
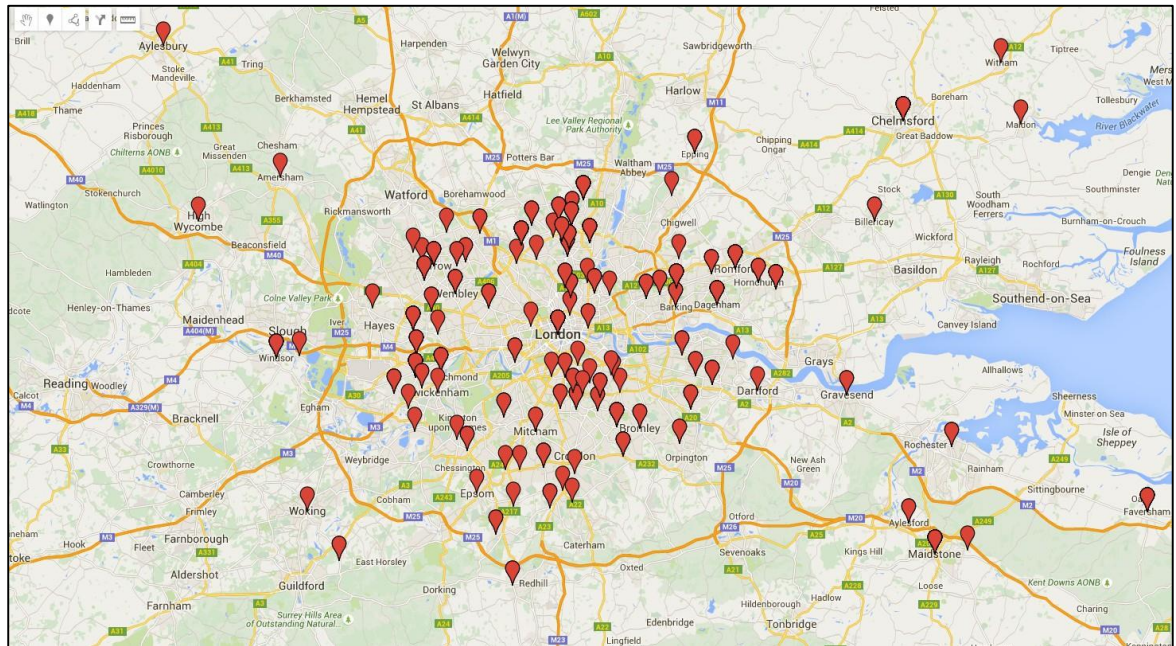


Figure 10: Origin of CORB Evacuees in the Greater London Area

Source – Database (compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110),
Map produced with Google Maps.



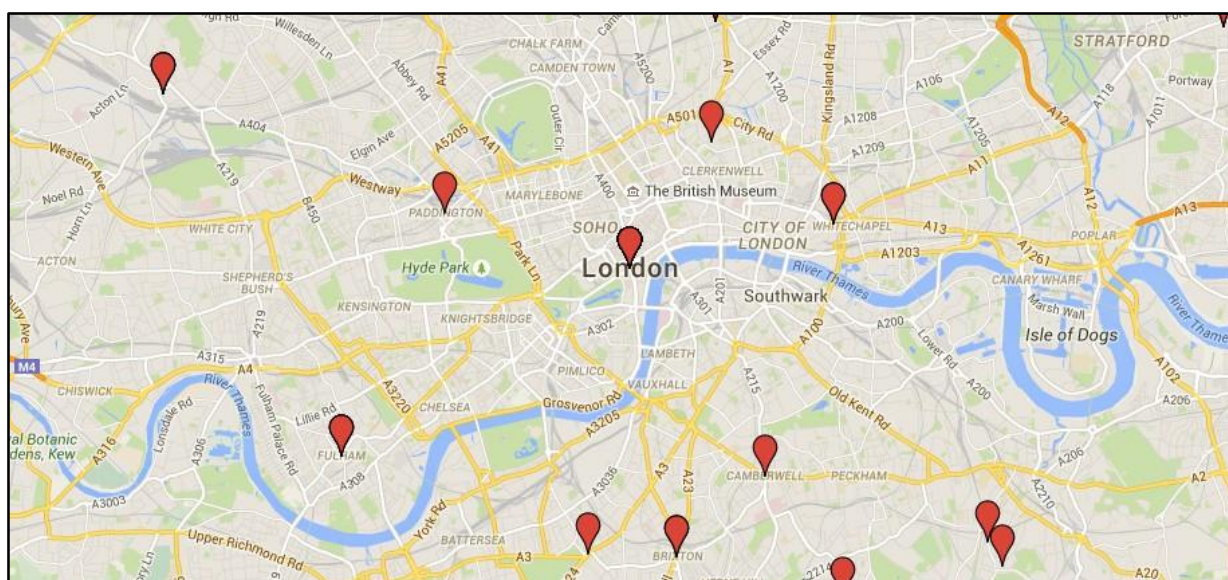
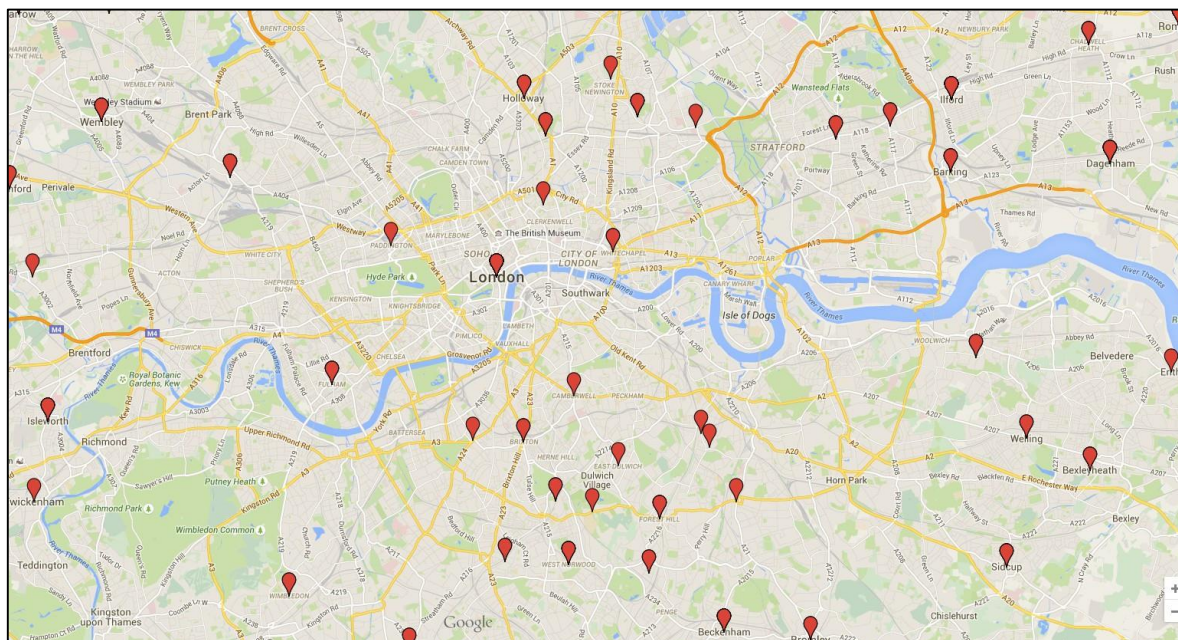


Figure 11: Provincial Distribution of CORB evacuees in Nominated and Unnominated Homes

Source – Database (compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110).

	Nominated	Unnominated
Ontario (607)	311	296
British Columbia (207)	110	97
Quebec (136)	59	77
Alberta (107)	55	52
Saskatchewan (102)	45	57
Manitoba (167)	42	125
Nova Scotia (145)	12	132 (1 not listed)
New Brunswick (31)	3	27
Prince Edward Island (25)	0	25

Figure 12: Proportion of Provincial Distribution of CORB Evacuees in Nominated and Unnominated Homes

Source – Database (compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110)

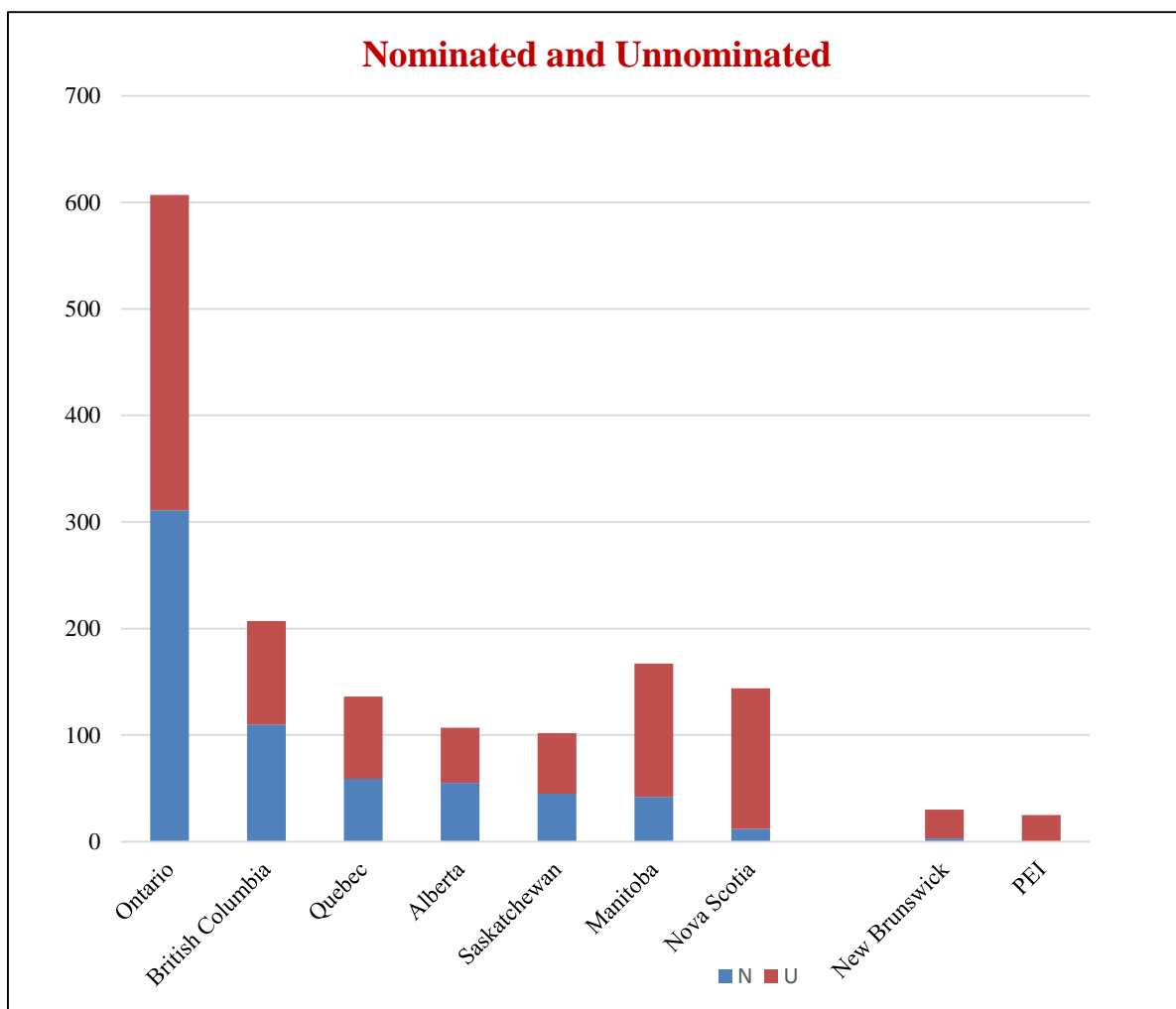


Figure 13: Provincial Distribution of CORB Evacuees in Nominated Homes

Source – Database (compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110)

Province	Nominated	Total	Percentage
Ontario	316	607	52%
British Columbia	110	207	53%
Quebec	59	136	43%
Alberta	55	107	51%
Saskatchewan	45	102	44%
Manitoba	42	167	25%
Nova Scotia	12	145	0.08%
New Brunswick	3	31	0.09%
Prince Edward Island	0	25	0%

**Figure 14: Relationship of CORB Evacuees to Nominated Homes
(National Trend)**

Source – Database (compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110)

Relationship	Total (644)
Relation Unspecified	246
Aunt	192
Uncle	74
Aunt and Uncle	49
Grandparents	25
Relatives	35
Cousin	15
Siblings	4
Mother/Father	3
Masonic Lodge	1

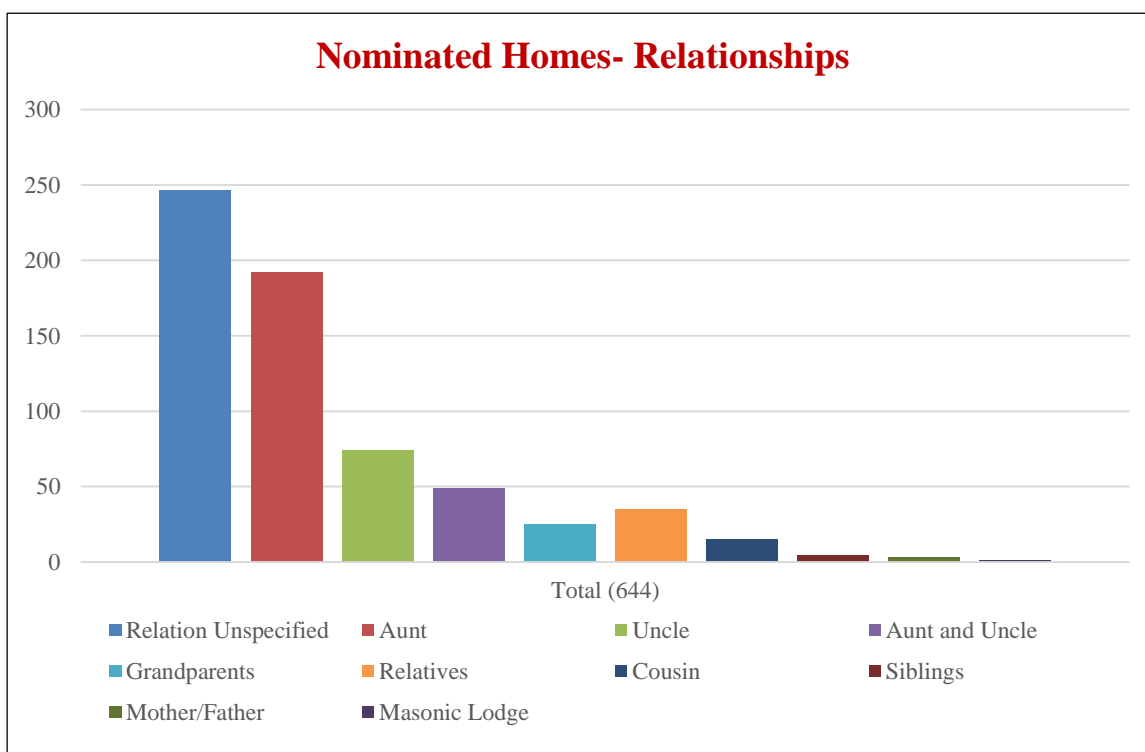


Figure 15: Gender and Age of CORB Evacuees

Source – Database (compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110)

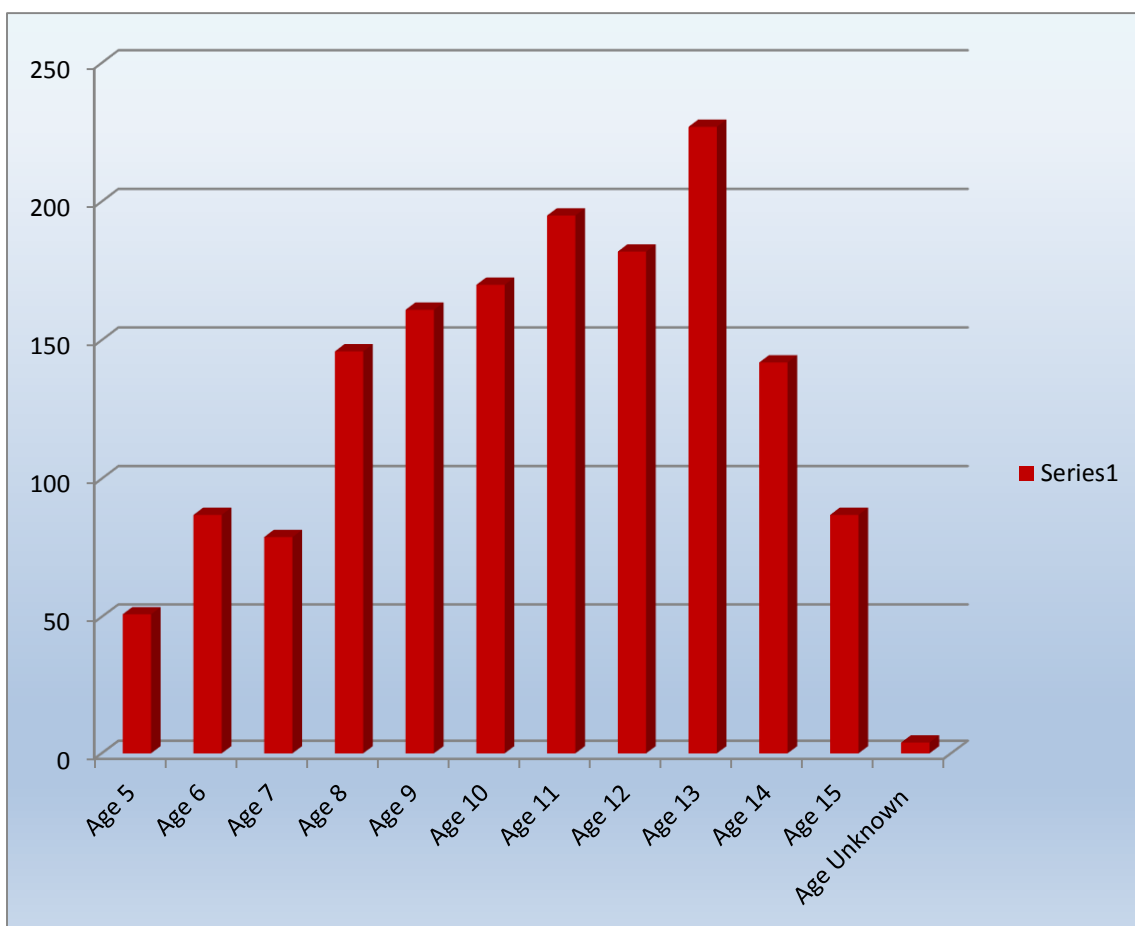
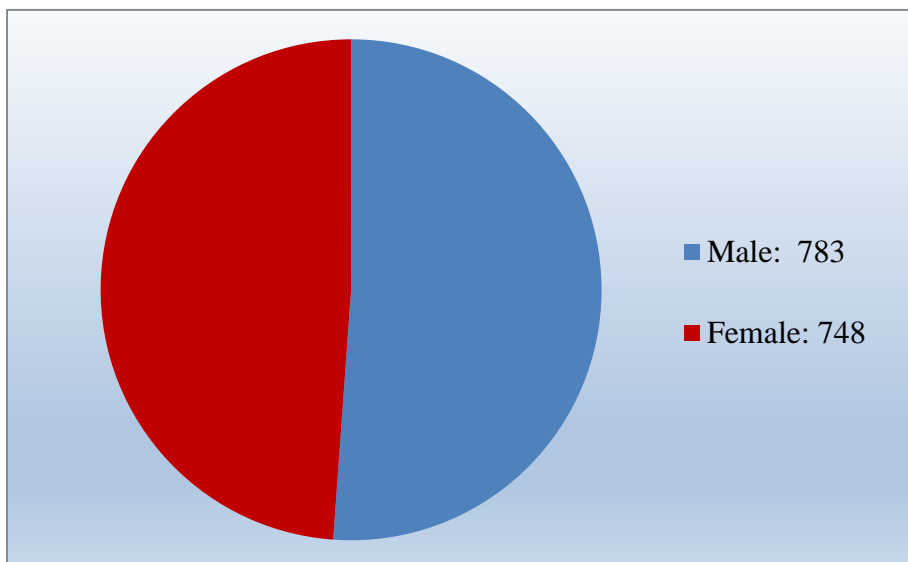


Figure 16: Religious Distribution of Unnominated CORB Evacuees by Province

Source – Database (Compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110)

Province	ON	BC	QC	AB	SK	MB	NS	NB	PEI	Total
Unnominated	286	98	77	52	57	125	132	27	25	879 (twelve not listed N/U)
Protestant/ Church of England	211	73	58	44	50	98	114	25	23	696
Roman Catholic	26	6	5	3	2	7	16	2	2	69
Methodist/ Wesleyan	11	9	7	2	4	12	0	0	0	45
Presbyterian	12	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	15
Baptist	2		6	0	1	2	0	0	0	11
Non-Conformist	8		1	1	0	0	1	0	0	11
Congregational	3	5				1				9
Chris. Scientist	2					1				3
Episcopalian	4					1				5
Church of Scotland	3									3
Jewish	2	2		2						6
Salvation Army	2									2
N/A						2				2
Chapel							1			1
Non- Denominational		1								1

Figure 17: Private Evacuees who traveled with Siblings

Source – Library and Archives Canada, RG 26, vol 16, Immigration Branch, Statistical Tabulations.

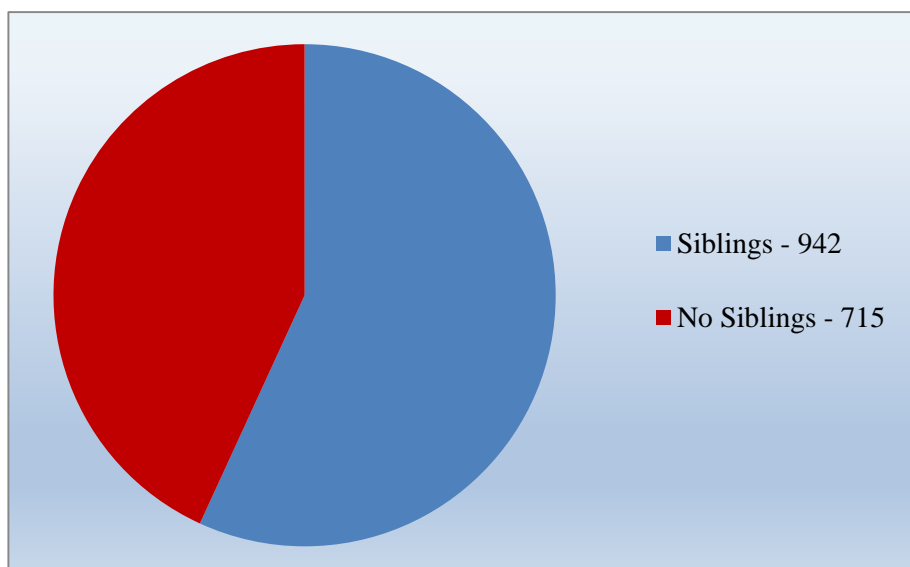


Figure 18: Provincial Distribution of Private Evacuees

Source – Library and Archives Canada, RG 26, vol 16, Immigration Branch, Statistical Tabulations.

Private	1855
PEI	0
Saskatchewan	17
New Brunswick	22
Alberta	26
Manitoba	40
Nova Scotia	74
British Columbia	170
Quebec	324
Ontario	1182

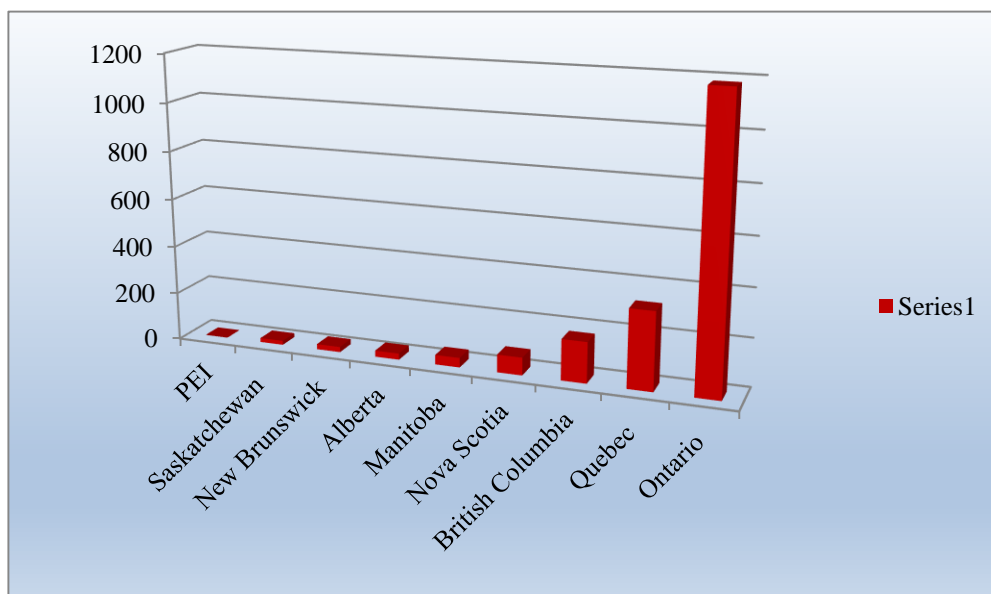


Figure 19: Provincial Distribution of CORB and Private Evacuees

Sources – Library and Archives Canada, RG 26, vol 16, Immigration Branch, Statistical Tabulations; Database (Compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110).

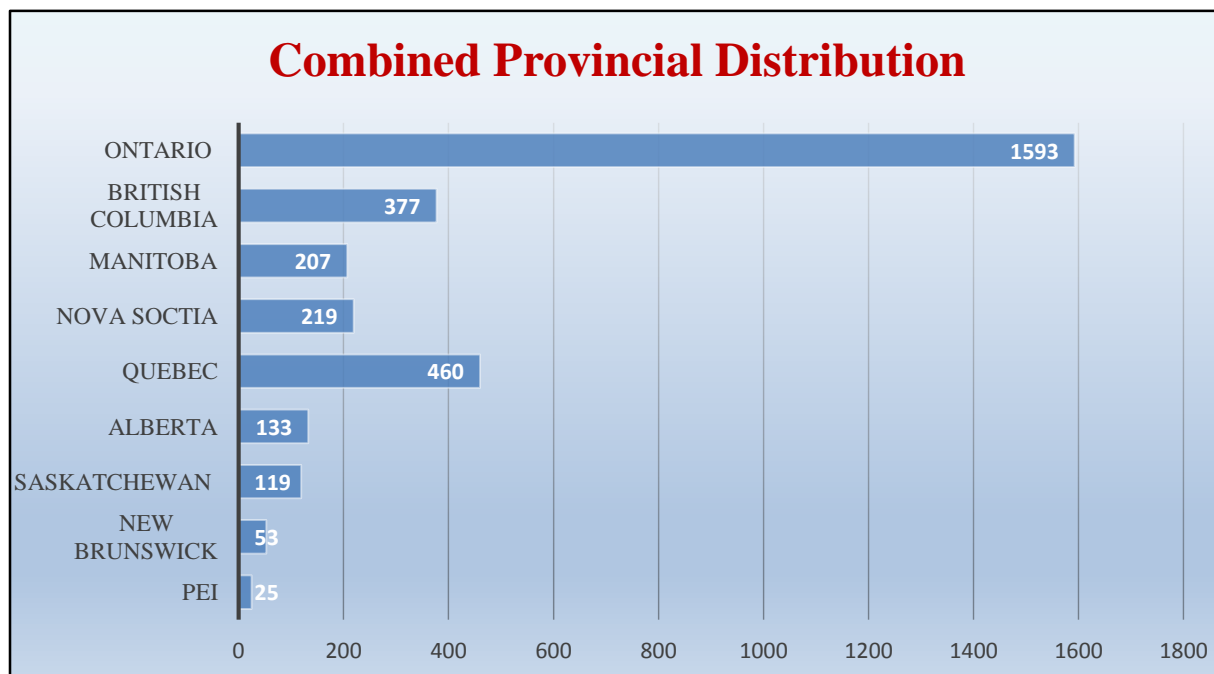


Figure 20: Medical Conditions for the First 400 CORB Evacuees

Source - Database (Compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110).

Medical Condition	119 Children (140 cases total)
Teeth	35
Glasses/Sight	16
Scarlet Fever	15
Measles	12
Chicken Pox	8
Mumps	8
Rubella	6
Ear	4
Nose/Sinus (chronic bleeds/congestion)	3
Diphtheria Carrier	3
Pneumonia	2
Epilepsy	2
Eyes (Pink eye)	2
Kidney	2

There was also one case for each of the follow:

Appendicitis, Asthma Attacks, Chorea, Circumcised, Deafness, Poliomyelitis, Glands, Bronchial condition, Hay Fever, Heart Murmur, Impetigo (+ heart), Influenza (hospital), Jaundice, Lung Observation, Rheumatic fever.

Figure 21: Medical Conditions Requiring Surgery
(First 400 CORB Evacuees)

Source - Database (Compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110)

Surgery	Cases (79 for 74 children)
Tonsils	46
Tonsils and Adenoids	10
Appendix	21
Abscess in groin	1
Throat	1
Total	79

Figure 22: Accidents and Injuries

(First 400 CORB Evacuees)

Source - Database (Compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110).

Injuries (18)	16 Children
Broken bones	Nine
Leg, Wrist, Ankle, Rib, Arm (5)	
Cut Eyes	Two
Hot Water	Two
Hand Injury	Two
Hip Injury (bicycling)	One
Dog Bite to leg	One
Skull Injury	One

Figure 23: Number of Placements for CORB Evacuees

Source - Database (Compiled from the National Archives, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110).

Number of Placements	Number of Evacuees	
One	863	(56%)
Two	355	(23%)
Three	152	(10%)
Four	88	(5.7%)
Five	42	(2.7%)
Six	12	(0.7%)
Seven	6	(0.39%)
Eight	1	
Nine	1	
Ten	1	
Eleven	1	

Figure 24: Reasons for CORB Evacuees' First Moves

Source – Database (Compiled from *The National Archives*, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110).

Reason	Cases (656)
Boy "over Placed"	1
Circumstance (no fault)	1
Parents' Request	2
Fear of Japanese Invasion	2
Confinement of Hostess	2
CAS not satisfied	2
Accident to host	2
Family	3
Behaviour	5
Death of Host/ess	5
Schooling	7
Discipline	11
Financial	40
Social	48
DNGA	51
Family Circumstances	81
Host/ess Health	125
Not Given	198

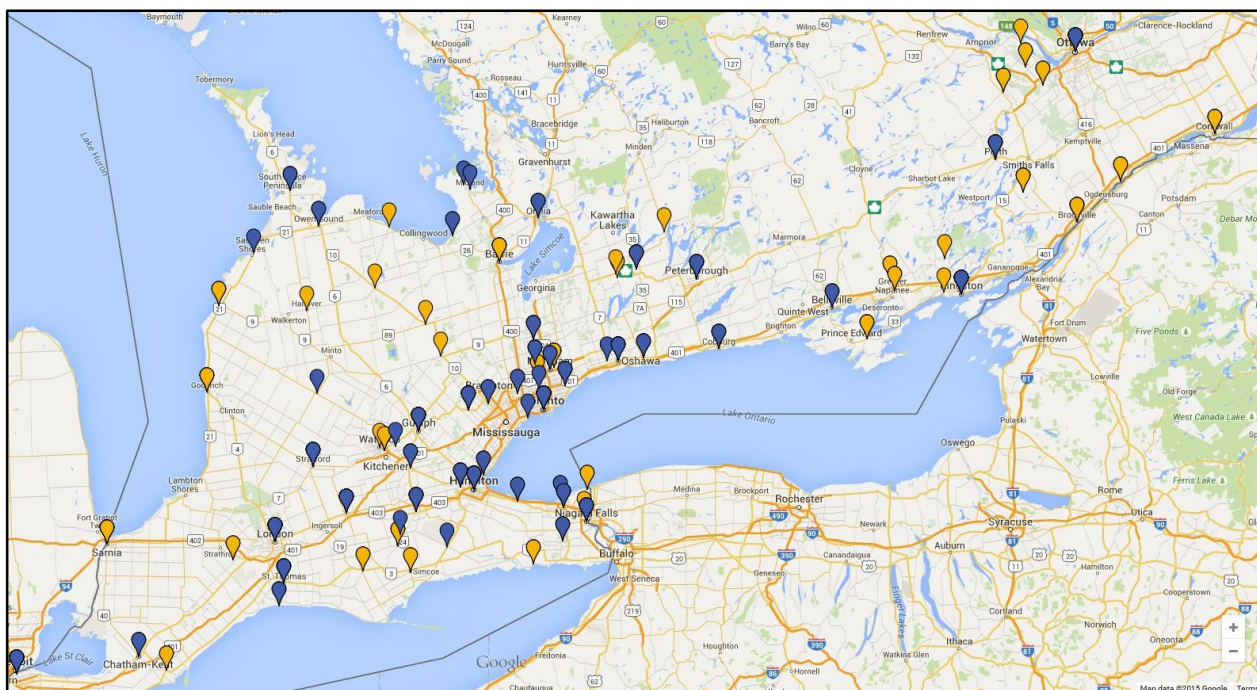
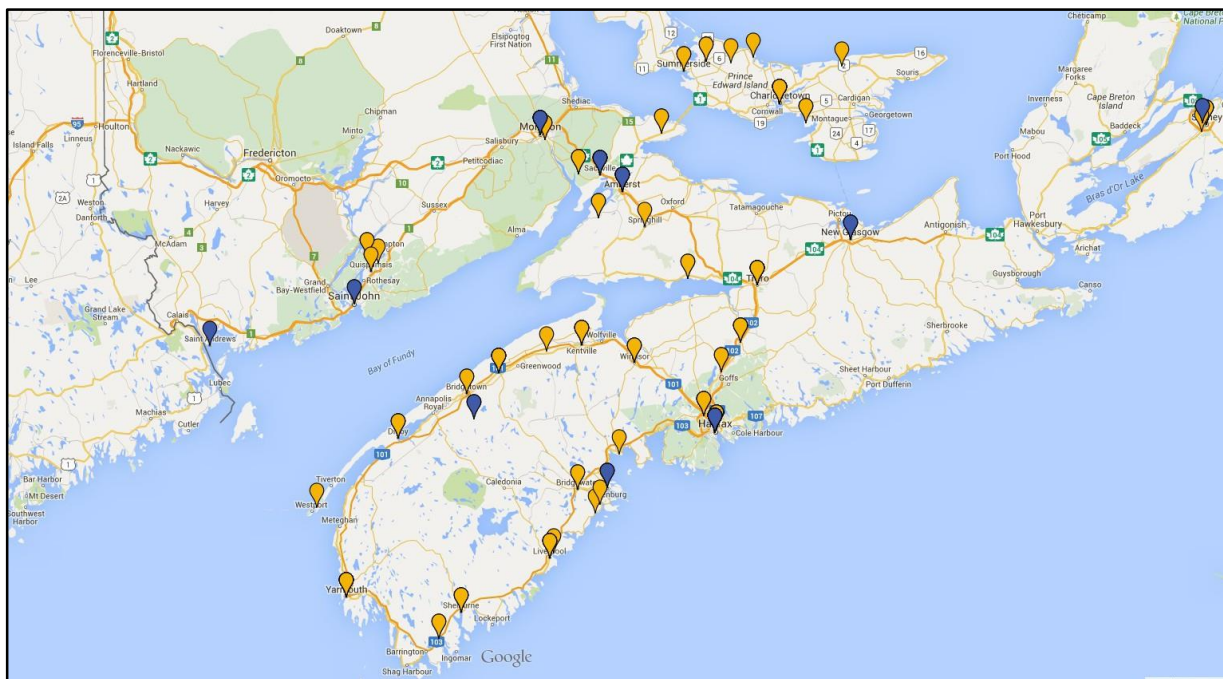
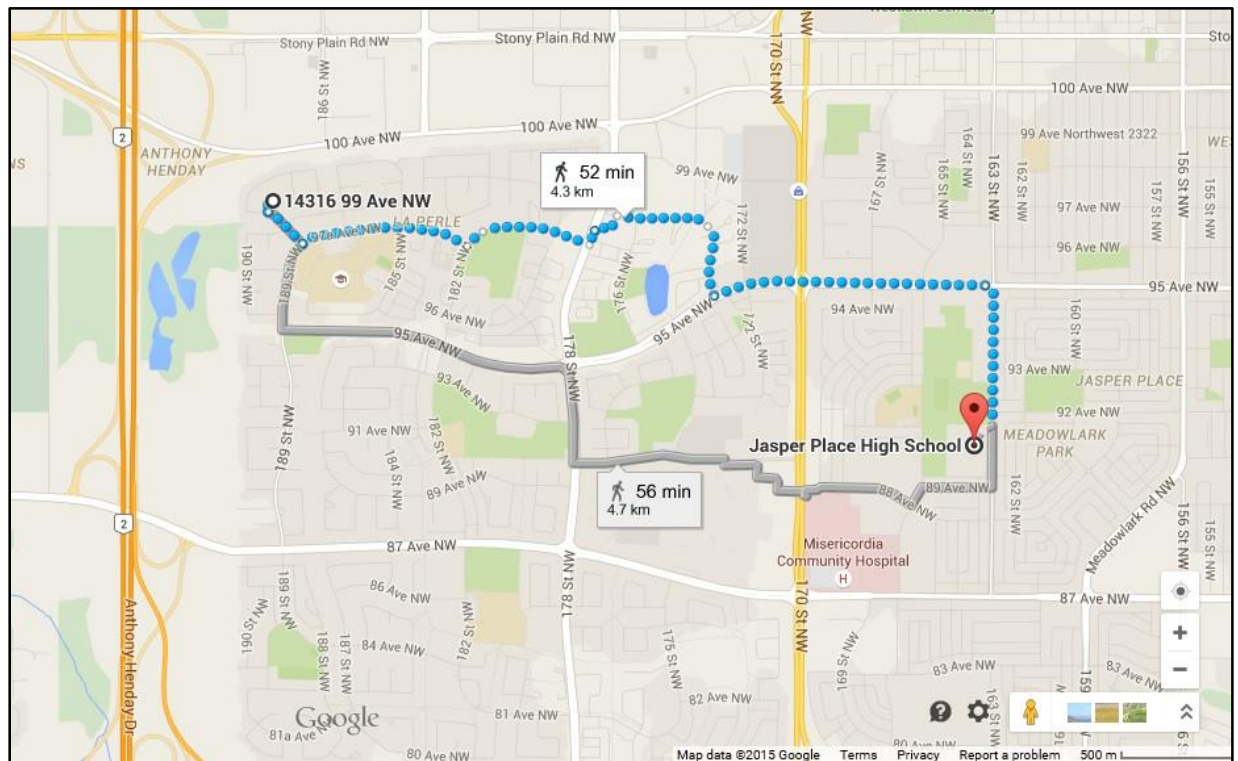


Figure 26: An Evacuee's Journey to School

Source - Database (compiled from *The National Archives*, Dominion Office, DO 131/107-110), Google Maps.

Sample Evacuee Journey to School (Represented by walking route, Winnipeg.)



Curriculum Vitae

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Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS)	2014-2015
Finalist, Western 3 Minute Thesis Competition	2015
Past and Present Award, <i>Royal Historical Society, UK</i>	2014
Ley and Lois Smith Award in Military History, <i>Department of History, University of Western Ontario</i>	2013
Global Skills Award, <i>University of Kent</i>	2012

Publications:

“Dangers Behind, Pleasures Ahead”: British-Canadian Identity and the Evacuation of British Children to Canada during the Second World War, *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2, Fall 2014, 20 pages.

“Dear Mummy and Daddy, I was out on my toboggan today’: Identity and Agency of British Children Evacuated to Canada in the Second World War.” Book chapter, 25 pages, Palgrave Macmillan, History of Childhood Series, November, 2015.

Book reviews:

“One Family’s War”, Rollie Bourassa, ed. *Great Plains Quarterly*, 2015.

“Invisible Immigrants”, Marilyn Barber and Murray Wilson, eds. *Canadian Historical Review*, 2015.

“Private Women and the Public Good”, Carmen Neilson. *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 2015.

“Creating this Place”, Linda Cullum and Marilyn Porter, eds. *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 2015.

Media Coverage and Public Engagement

“England’s War Children”, *Five Magazine*, volume 1, Issue 12, 2015.

CHRW 94.9FM, “The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe, Canadian Edition”, March 10, 2015.

CBC Radio Interview, *Ontario Morning with Wei Chen*, January 13, 2015.

“Student Returns Identity to British War Evacuees”, *Western News*, January 8, 2015.

“Student Returns Identity to British War Evacuees”, *London Community News*, January 1, 2014.

CBC Radio Interview, *All in a Day* (Ottawa), November 11, 2014.

“Operation Pied Piper”, *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, November 8, 2014.

Related Work Experience:

Teaching Assistant, History 1810E, Wars that Changed the World, UWO 2012-2015

Researcher, Second World War Commemorative Project
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Vice-Regal Office, Queen's Park, Toronto 2014

Teaching Assistant, History 1401E, Modern Europe, 1715 to the Present, UWO 2011-2012

Research Assistantship, British Juvenile Courts during the Second World War, Dr. Amy Bell, Huron University College, London Metropolitan Archives, London, England, 2012 and 2015.

Invited Talks and Conference Papers

“We’ll Meet Again: A Database of British Child Evacuees in the Second World War”, London & Middlesex County branch, *Ontario Genealogical Society*, May 2, 2015.

“From Peril to Peace: The Educational Experiences of British Children Evacuated to Canada in the Second World War.” *Regulations, Resistances & Reconciliations: Histories of Education*, Canadian History of Education Association, The Delta Bessborough Hotel, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, October 23-26, 2014.

“From British Shelters to Canadian Classrooms: The Educational Experiences of British Children Evacuated to Canada in the Second World War.” *Education, War and Peace: The International Standing Conference for the History of Education*, University of London, July 23-26, 2014.

“Sheltered Under the Maple Tree: British Child Evacuees in Canada During the Second World War.” *Refugees and Migrants: Unaccompanied Children in Britain, 1914-2014*, University of Southampton, July 17-18, 2014.

“‘Shall I call you Mummy or Auntie?’ The Complexities of Canadian Women Caring for British Child Evacuees During the Second World War.” Roundtable discussion on panel: “Mothers on the Edge: Women, Work, and English-Speaking North America.” *Berkshire Conference on the History of Women*, University of Toronto, May 22-25, 2014.

“Dangers Behind, Pleasures Ahead: The Evacuation of British Children to Canada in the Second World War.” *Canada Abroad, The Bader International Study Centre at Herstmonceux Castle*, East Sussex, England, July 29, 2013.

“‘Dear Mummy and Daddy, I was out on my toboggan today’: British Child Evacuees in Canada during the Second World War.” *Children, Childhood and Youth in the British World*, King’s College London, England, July 20, 2013.

“‘I hope there are not too many air raids in Bristol’: Constructions of Space in the Evacuation of British Children to Canada in the Second World War.” *Society for the History of Childhood and Youth Biennial Conference*, University of Nottingham, England, June 26, 2013.

“Snapshots of Canada: Memories from British Child Evacuees Sent to Canada during the Second World War.” *Displaced Childhoods: Oral History and Traumatic Experience*, Southampton Solent University, England, July 14, 2012.

“From Lion to Leaf: British Child Evacuees in Canada during the Second World War.” *Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association*, University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, May 29, 2012.