

to home. While it hits close to home, it also reminds me, and all readers, that the long history of colonization also showcases the strength of a people who are still here—a people who refuse to forget, while sharing their history and journey with all Canadians as we move forward. I, for one, will be including this history and journey in future course readings going forward thanks to Jackson Pind.

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Ruth Lamont, Eloise Moss, and Charlotte Wildman

Friendless or Forsaken? Child Emigration from Britain to Canada, 1860–1935

McGill-Queen's University Press, 2024. 264 pp.

In the late 1860s, a group of children from Mrs. Rye's Home for Destitute Little Girls embarked from Liverpool docks bound for Canada. They were among the first of more than 80,000 children from all over the United Kingdom who were emigrated to Canada over the next seventy or so years. *Friendless or Forsaken* explores why the program, sponsored by state and charitable agencies, was so attractive to philanthropists in industrial cities in North West England, how it worked, and its legacy. As authors, Ruth Lamont, Eloise Moss, and Charlotte Wildman (all based at the University of Manchester) conclude, the scheme's longevity rested on its ability to meet a number of diverse needs: middle-class supporters believed it was a way to save children from the dangerous environment of poverty and vice that prevailed on city streets; for local officials, child migration addressed concerns about rising crime and at the same time, lowered the numbers of the poor who needed support; national officials on both sides of the Atlantic viewed the schemes as a way to strengthen the Empire and promote Canadian development by providing much needed labour particularly on Canadian farms. This of course, left the question: what about the children? And for the authors, their judgement is mixed—some emigrated children clearly benefitted; others were friendless and forsaken.

As chapter 1 explains, the propaganda underpinning the child migration schemes rested on the belief that impoverished children could be rescued from the pernicious influences of vice and sin that were endemic on northern city streets. If children could be taken “from the gutter” (32) and relocated in the clean, healthy air of Canada, it was believed they would become morally upright and productive citizens. As many involved in the programs came to realize, however, transportation to Canada and the promise of a new life did not guarantee the children's welfare. As the authors point out, the presumption that children sent from the UK might have criminal tendencies often had a profound impact on their reception in Canada. Government officials and foster parents regularly doubted children's claims that they were being abused. Moreover, reports and emigration officials themselves periodically chronicled instances of children being exploited or neglected. Nonetheless, “the

narrative of rescue and redemption via emigration to Canada” was persuasive, and the schemes continued until the 1930s (59).

The question of how to actually implement these various emigration schemes or even to determine who should be emigrated was complicated, however, by the legal void that revolved around who had authority over children’s lives. Chapter 2 chronicles the shift in the law from one in which, under the common law, fathers had exclusive authority over their offspring to the increasing role of the state in protecting children’s welfare. And once in Canada, the problem was exacerbated by a different legal regime in which English emigrant agents had no formal ability to oversee their charges’ welfare. Officially, each child had to formally agree to be sent away (and there are a few documented cases of children refusing). But more often their families did not appreciate the implication of their decision and that they would never see their daughter or son again. Nonetheless, a skilful mining of the hundreds of letters the children themselves sent home to siblings or to the organizations and individuals who sponsored their emigration illustrates that they often tried to take charge of their own destiny. In a finely nuanced analysis of “Letters from the Land of Plenty” (chapter 3), the authors caution that the correspondence is not necessarily representative of the range of experiences and emotions of those sent to Canada. Letters published in local newspapers had often been carefully selected to illustrate the success of the programs and to convince donors to continue to support their efforts. Nonetheless, the correspondence that has survived offers a glimpse of children’s voices and “highlights children’s agency” (90). Some were grateful and wrote glowingly of their new situation in Canada, others were angry at being separated from siblings, and a few wanted to return home or wrote to complain about poor living and working conditions.

Even reports of the desperate situation of some children did not deter various organisations from continuing to appeal to the public for the financial support that was crucial for their work. The program depended on a combination of private donations, subsidies from local authorities and per child support from the Canadian government. Chapter 4 explores the complicated and ever changing “financial scaffolding” (125) of many of the emigration societies. The authors’ painstaking audit of the accounts of a number of rescue schemes illustrates the diverse agendas that were at play in supporting child emigration. Local and national governments calculated that emigrating children to Canada was a net economic benefit to the taxpayer; private donors were convinced that they were saving children from the streets. What is striking is how, in this regard, children were transformed from individuals in need of saving to economic units.

But as the last chapter illustrates, the impersonal business of child emigration has left a long personal legacy. Many former children and their families have been determined to chronicle their experiences, and their stories continue to resonate in popular culture through the publication of numerous memoirs, novels and popular histories over the last almost 100 years. Some of these recount stories of children saved and making new lives for themselves; others tell of hardship, loneliness, and abuse. What is clear is that emigrated children (and their children and grandchildren)

refuse to be forgotten. The authors make the point that even today, monuments to those buried in unmarked graves, like that erected in 2017 in Toronto at Park Lawn Cemetery, are sharp reminders of those transported to Canada.

What I find striking about this excellent book is how effectively the authors are able to integrate a wide range of sources into a study that spans the Atlantic and at the same time, centres on children. The authors' journey into this project, like that of the children, began in Britain and particularly in Liverpool, with the opening of a rich repository of records from the Nugent Care Charity; as with the children, it soon encompassed records from London, Ottawa, and Toronto. The result reminds us how what is often seen as a Canadian story cannot be understood without appreciating the much broader context. The real strength of *Friendless or Forsaken*, however, is how the authors manage to take us into the world of philanthropy of the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. We are left with the sense that though the schemes to emigrate children were well meaning, they were inherently flawed. To supporters of the various emigration schemes, children were objects to be emigrated, one of many commodities to be exported to the colony. This is not to say that we do not hear children's voices. The authors skilfully turn promoters' views around, and we learn from their letters and later their memoirs how children understood their situation and tried to take charge of their own destiny. This is an important and much needed addition to the literature.

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Elizabeth Marshall

The Drinking Curriculum: A Cultural History of Childhood and Alcohol

Fordham University Press, 2024. 176 pp.

In *The Drinking Curriculum*, Elizabeth Marshall takes on two centuries of American visual culture to reveal a persistent and consistently paradoxical set of lessons about childhood and alcohol. Drawing from a wide range of images from literary texts, comics, advertisements, film, and television dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, the book illustrates how adult anxieties about alcohol have been reflected through fictionalized child figures. Marshall offers keen insights into several compelling questions about childhood and drinking, inviting readers to consider the purposes and functions of the child as a central figure in cultural lessons about alcohol, the reasons for the perceived obscenity of associating children with drunkenness, and the motivations that drive the circulation of these pervasive tropes.

While positioned as a cultural history spanning cultural studies, social history, and childhood studies, the book's emphasis on the pedagogical function of visual culture also extends its relevance to cultural curriculum studies, which has long understood