

ROGER KERSHAW

Title

A history of British Child Migration Schemes

Summary

British child emigration schemes operated from 1618 to 1967 primarily to Canada and Australia. At its height, schemes were sending overseas on average 2,000 children per year to Canada between 1870 and 1914 with the support of the British government. Today this begs the question why and what records of this remain?

Abstract

This talk will explore the reasons behind the decisions to migrate pauper children overseas using name rich central sources held at TNA and elsewhere. With the use of case studies, it will examine the successes and failings of the schemes and endeavour to understand why the policy continued in Australia as late as 1967. It also looks at some unique chapters in British child migration history such as the publication of the Doyle report in 1875 which effectively suspended migration until certain improvements had been made, and the story of CORB – the Children’s Overseas Reception Board – which helped to emigrate some 2,600 child evacuees overseas between May and September 1940.

What the lecture will cover:

- Overview of child migration policies
- A child’s life in Victorian England
- The early pioneers
 - Maria Rye
 - Annie MacPherson
 - Dr Barnardo
- Journey to a new life
- Sources for the study of child migration
 - Ministry of Health/Poor Law Union records
 - Home Office records
 - Colonial and Dominions Office records
 - Private archives
 - Published sources and websites
- Child evacuation during the Second World War
 - The CORB children
 - The sinking of *The City of Benares*

Audience

Beginner to Intermediate