

James, Henry,
Elizabeth and Caroline
Davidson by Caroline's
Daughter Fay
Braithwaite
Home Children
1890s



The Story of Four Davidson Children Coming to Canada

James, Henry, Elizabeth, and
Caroline Davidson



Caroline

First of all, I am the daughter of Caroline and had three brothers. We grew up in a small town near Edmonton, Alberta and our Father died when I was six years old. I knew names of my mother's brothers and sister. James and Elizabeth remained in Ontario, while my mother and her brother Henry came to Alberta, so I met my farm cousins; Alec, Jane, and another brother. I knew my Davidson grandparents had died while the children were young and all my mother would say, the family came to stay with an uncle but would not give a name, other than they lived in Ontario.

Since the work of my husband took us to many areas of Canada and when we lived in Brampton, Ont. In the 1960's, I started to locate my aunt Elizabeth's family. She had been married twice, Culp and Hamilton, and had run the Post Office in the now ghost town of Ballycroy, about 10 miles north of Brampton. History buffs there were able to point me in the direction of finding two cousins, one from each family. Elizabeth's eldest daughter also had a daughter living in Brampton, and her children and my two daughters went to the same high school. It was about this time that I first heard of Home Children and thought my mother might have been one of them, but did not start inquiries until 1997.

I received this information from Barnardo Homes, London , England in 1998

These four orphan children were admitted temporarily to our Newcastle - Ever Open Door - on an application by the Rev. G. R. Taylor, Vicar of Byker. After a report on the case by our local inspector, they were granted permanent admission to the Homes. James and Henry are thirteen and ten years of age, respectively. Elizabeth and Caroline eight and six.

The facts of the case are few and simple, but sad enough. The parents, Henry and Caroline Davidson were steady, respective working people, who brought up their children well. On 9th January, 1892, the Father, a labourer, died at St. Cuthbert St., Gateshead of bronchitis. The mother and children then went to two rooms at 115, Harvey Street in Byker, and received out-door relief from the parish: the mother, in addition, goes out to work at washing and charring. About two years ago, the mother's health began to fail, and owing to an internal malady, and after getting worse she entered the workhouse infirmary in January last. An operation was performed, and a tumor removed, and the mother remaining two months on the infirmary was taken home. The operation proved unavailing to save her, and after lingering for a few weeks, she died. The death occurred on the 9th at the above mentioned address. The little home was sold to defray the funeral expenses, and to save from entering the workhouse, Mr. Taylor asked that he might bring these children to our shelter.



Elizabeth

Of the six children left surviving, the eldest (Robert) is able to support himself. The next (Mary) is in a very weak state, consequently on long privation and attendance upon her mother. She is about to be sent away by the local Country Holiday Committee for a month, and a situation will probably be found for her afterwards. For the children now admitted no home, on the workhouse was available. They have no relatives, save an aunt and a cousin. Both these persons have done what they could for

mother and children in the past, but were not prepared to offer a home to any of the orphans. The aunt declined to do so, and did not even attend the funeral. The cousin has give children of his own. All the children are delicate, but not ailing. They are respectful and well behaved.

Relatives:

Brother, Rober-17, apprentice at a ship yard, 114-Harboy Street, Byker, Newcastle

Sister, 14, at present sheltered by a neighbour

Aunt (maternal) Maria Phillips, wife of a carpenter, New Road, Walker, Newcastle

The 5th Sept. 1895 - on this date James and Henry were sent to Canada, to Hazelbrae Home, Pererborough, Ont.

The 14th July, 1898 --- on this date Elizabeth and Caroline, aboard the SS Labrador, arriving in Quebec on 23rd(or 25th) July 1898. They also went to Hazelbrae Homes



Henry

I have some information from Hazelbrae Homes. My mother was sent to a Toronto family as a playmate for a 9 year old daughter and was well liked and sent to school. It is hard to tell how long this lasted, and it appears that Hazelbrae was always trying to keep her happy. She wrote letters to find her brothers and did ask to be place near to Henry. She spoke of being in Southern Ont. And I believe may have lived with her sister and her first husband. My mother leanred to play the piano, could read and write well, and also knew nursing, which was useful during the 1918 flu.

Henry and my mother came to Edmonton Alberta in 1908 when Henry was able to purchase land, West of Edmonton. Elizabeth and James cam from Ont. for a visit, but did not like the early conditions of the city, growing quickly and had many muddy roads. I believe my mother worked in the Edmonton Laundry (though she would not admit it) she met my father Jerry Beauchamp who was a partner in the business.

They married on January 22nd 1915. There was a family of four, three boys and I was the third child. During the year of 1927, my father left the laundry, and our Edmonton home sold to buy 10 acres in the town of Beverly, which is adjacent to Edmonton. My father loved gardening and although the house was old, we had many fine things; good linens and silverware, a piano and rugs. He made the gardens so beautiful that people drove out from Edmonton to see them. We also had a small fruit and vegetable market, chickens, turkeys, pigs, and a horse. These were happy times until the 30's and father could not sell the garden produce for a living. My father had been a marathon runner had we had silver cups for successful races, but he had a heart attack in Nov. 1932 when I was six years old and my younger brother was four. This was a very sad time for the family--- I recall hearing my mother telling her brother Henry that she had less than twenty dollars in the bank after his funeral. She was hoping to sell the property, but with out a will and a mortgage on the land, she could not sell until all the children were of age, so we stayed there with the Mother Allowance. We managed to survive. We should have attended Beverly school but mother thought we would do better in the Edmonton system. After one year they told us that we have to pay for it, so off to the town school but only for one year. During that time, mother saved and bought an Edmonton lot for \$25 and back we went to the city school only having to pay a small amount of property tax each year. It was a walk of one and a half miles.



James

With a sow pig we raised, the piglets and sold them in the fall and had the snow butchered for winter meat along with chickens as they stopped lying, rebuying sow and baby chicks in the spring. Mother seemed to know all the tricks of providing good health. She sewed and knit and older brother did any kind of work they could get. I remember one job paying four dollars a week. Gideon just covered his carfare, a four pound of peanut butter as his board, and a little left over. We all finished high school and life improved when my brother Lynn joined the air force and sent money home. Also, better jobs came along too.

My elder brother had a ruptured ear drum so was not allowed to join-up.

Our mother developed an early dementia and had to be cared for, for many years until her death in September 1973 at the age of 84. I believe mother had many happy years, she worked hard to give each of the children a fair chance in life, but her end was sad, not knowing many of her wonderful grandchildren.